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AGENDA

Pwyllgor	PWYLLGOR YMGYNGHOROL RHIANTA CORFFORAETHOL
Dyddiad ac amser y cyfarfod	DYDD MAWRTH, 29 IONAWR 2019, 2.00 PM
Lleoliad	YSTAFELL BWYLLGORA 4 - NEUADD Y SIR
Aelodaeth	Cynghorydd Merry (Cadeirydd) Cynghorwyr Bowden, Davies, Hinchey, Jenkins, Lent, Lister, Molik, a/ac Weaver

1 Ymddiheuriadau am Absenoldeb

Derbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldebau.

2 Datgan Buddiannau

I'w wneud ar ddechrau'r eitem agenda dan sylw, yn unol â'r Cod Ymddygiad Aelodau.

3 Cofnodion *(Tudalennau 5 - 10)*

Cymeradwyo cofnodion y cyfarfod blaenorol a gynhaliwyd ar 16 Hydref 2018 fel cofnod cywir.

4 Gwasanaethau Plant – Cyflwyniad Gwasanaethau Pobl Ifanc/Adroddiad Perfformiad *(Tudalennau 11 - 26)*

Rhoi diweddariad i aelodau ar gylich gorchwyl, gweithgareddau presennol a pherfformiad y timau Gwasanaethau Plant, gan ganolbwyntio ar weithio gyda phobl ifanc.

5 Cyflwyniad Model Rheoli Achos Uwch

Cyflwyniad gan Kate Hustler (RhG, Gwasanaeth Troseddau Ieuencid)

6 Diweddariad ar Hyfforddiant Ysgolion Cyfeillgar CLA

Bydd Nicola Holder (Cydlynnydd Addysg i Blant sy'n Derbyn Gofal) yn rhoi cyflwyniad.

7 Diweddariad Adolygiad Arfer Plant (*Tudalennau 27 - 56*)

Bydd Alys Jones (RhG, Diogelu) yn bresennol i roi diweddariad.

8 Adroddiadau Briffio

Caiff yr adroddiadau eu rhoi er gwybodaeth a bydd swyddogion ar gael i ateb unrhyw gwestiynau allai fod gan aelodau mewn perthynas â'r adroddiadau.

Mae Eitemau 8e, 8f ac 8g yn eithriadau rhag cael eu cyhoeddi gan eu bod nhw'n cynnwys gwybodaeth gyfrinachol o'r un disgrifiad a nodir ym mharagraff 12 Rhan 4 a pharagraff 21 o Ran 5 Atodlen 12A Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972. Mae'n bosibl y bydd y cyhoedd yn cael eu gwahardd o'r cyfarfod ar gais y Pwyllgor yn unol ag Adran 100A(4) Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972 yn ystod trafodaethau ar yr eitemau hyn.

8a Adroddiad SAA (*Tudalennau 57 - 70*)

8b Gwasanaeth Mabwysiadu Rhanbarthol Adroddiad Blynyddol VVC (*Tudalennau 71 - 112*)

8c Adroddiad Craffu'r Gwasanaethau Plant – Chwarter 2 2018 (*Tudalennau 113 - 142*)

8d Adroddiad Cwynion a Sylwadau Chwarter 2 2018 (*Tudalennau 143 - 150*)

8e Adroddiad Archwiliad Crosslands (Cyfrinachol) (*Tudalennau 151 - 166*)

8f Adroddiadau Rheoliad 32 Crosslands (Cyfrinachol) (*Tudalennau 167 - 178*)

8g Adroddiadau Rheoliad 32 Tŷ Storrie (*Tudalennau 179 - 196*)

9 Diweddariad Ffrydiau Gwaith Aelodau (*Tudalennau 197 - 198*)

Y Cynghorydd Fenella Bowden

10 Diweddariad Ymweliadau Aelodau (*Tudalennau 199 - 202*)

Mae Adroddiad 2 yr eitem hon wedi'i eithrio o'i gyhoeddi gan ei fod yn cynnwys gwybodaeth wedi'i heithrio o'r disgrifiad sydd ym mharagraff 14 o Ran 4 a pharagraff 22 o Ran 5 o Atodlen 12A Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972. Gallai'r cyhoedd gael eu gwahardd o'r cyfarfod drwy benderfyniad y Pwyllgor yn unol ag Adran 100A(4) Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972 wrth i'r eitem hon gael ei thrafod.

11 Y Flaenraglen Waith/Rhaglen Waith

Cynllun i ddilyn

12 Eitemau Brys (os oes rhai)

13 Dyddiad y Cyfarfod Nesaf

Bydd cyfarfod nesaf y Pwyllgor Cynghori Rhianta Corfforaethol ddydd Mawrth 2 Ebrill 2019.

Davina Fiore

Cyfarwyddwr Llywodraethu a Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol

Dyddiad: Dydd Mercher, 23 Ionawr 2019

Cyswllt: Mandy Farnham, 02920 872618, Mandy.Farnham@caerdydd.gov.uk

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16 OCTOBER 2018

Present: Councillor Merry (Chairperson)
Councillors Hinchey, Lent, Lister and Molik

Officers Present: Deborah Driffield (Assistant Director, Children's Services)

Advisors Present: Gillian James (Senior Achievement Leader, Closing the Gap)

20 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowden, Jenkins and Weaver and from Sureen Kutubi, Jess Brown and Rose Whittle – Committee Advisors

21 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

22 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairperson.

23 : LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN INCLUSION AT ST TEILO'S CHURCH IN WALES HIGH SCHOOL

The Chairperson welcomed Ian Loynd, Deputy Headteacher St Teilo's Church in Wales High School to the meeting. Mr Loynd wanted to share with Members his views as to why St Teilo's was so successful; time and money has been spent on pupil well-being an inclusion agenda. Currently the school has 43 looked after children, however that figures varies on a weekly basis.

The school has a mission and a purpose - pursuing the highest standards by ensuring that all space at the school is a learning space, a healing space and a sacred space. The ethos and culture of school has to be restorative and not punitive. Pupils staff are encouraged to help and nurture each other and contribute to the mission. The school is trying to work with Social Services to support the looked after children at the school.

St Teilo's does not have forms at school, they have faith families to offer support Mr Loynd provided Members with information provided in poem form by 3 young people, sharing the stories of how they come to spent time in care.

The Committee were invited to comment or raise questions on the information received from Mr Loynd. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members queried what can be done to make other schools as

successful as St Teilo's, Mr Loynd stated that St Teilo's is in the fortunate position to be well resourced and is currently operating with a balanced budget. In the circumstances they are in a position to employ staff; it also helps when prioritising where funds are required; for example LEAP is not needed as other support can be provided. In turn, there very little or no spent on alternative provision.

He advised Members that Local Authorities should look beyond the results and encourage and praise those who provide meaningful care to young people. It is important to stress that we are all Corporate Parents and are here to serve our young people.

- Members discussed the number of policies that have to be adhered to and whether there should be some overarching principles or policy or some form of corporate mapping exercise in relation to the various policies.
- Members noted that schools are still obstructive when it comes to the admission of looked after children. There has to be a more robust process in place, which needs to be adequately resourced to ensure that there is no delay in a child being admitted to a school; a delay which threatens the security of a young person.

Members discussed whether there could be some form of Task and Finish Inquiry, with the results going to Cabinet.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Loynd for attending the meeting and providing a presentation to Members.

24 : CHILD PRACTICE REVIEW

The Chairperson welcomed Alys Jones, Operational Manager – Safeguarding to the meeting to outline the findings of an Extended Child Practice Review which had taken place and had recently been published on the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Board website.

Members were advised that the start date for the scope of the review was between 2011 and 2014. The referral to the Regional Safeguarding Board Child Practice Review Sub Group was in 2014. There were difficulties in appointing a Chair and Panel Members which meant the Panel did not meet until March 2015. There had also been concerns raised about points made in the review, consequently the review has not been published until now. An Action Plan of recommendations were developed and agreed, due to the delays in this case a number of the actions have already been reviewed and completed, for example:

- Out of County Placements;
- Transfer of information;
- Point of contact referrals;
- Role of the missing person co-ordinator;
- Following through assessments;
- Risk assessments in relation to use of mobile phones;

- Keeping family members informed when there is no parental capacity; and
- Review all Wales Protocol

The Committee were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members were advised that a referral can be made by any professional involved in the case where they believe that lessons could be learned from the outcome. The public can also make a referral.
- Members expressed concern at the lengthy delay in reporting and publishing this review. The Officer advised that there has been a vast improvement in timeliness; whilst there is an increased number of referrals they are being investigated and concluded in a more timely manner; a new chair and panel members have been appointed and a new business unit has been set up to support the regional board.

Members noted that in respect of this particular review a number of other force areas and local authorities were involved. There were a large number of defendants involved in a complex case. The Director of Social Services at the time challenged the content and context of the report.

- Members requested further detailed information in relation to the delay and the recommendations made as a result of the review to ensure that the issues have been rectified.
- Members sought clarification as to the number of Child Practice Reviews conducted and outstanding.

25 : EDUCATION UPDATE - PROVISIONAL 2018 RESULTS

The Chairperson welcomed Gillian James (Senior Achievement Leader, Closing the Gap) to the meeting to update Members in relation to the provisional 2018 results, the provisional results having been circulated previously.

Members were advised that the results in St Teilo's Church in Wales High School had really improved and noted that outcomes across the city were still improving against previous results. There is still room for improvement, it is important that there are good lines of communication with young people; the difficulties have to be addressed with support and encouragement being provided.

The Committee were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members noted that whilst it is easy for a school to pride itself its good well-being policy, they do need to be challenged to ensure that they are doing what is best for their children. Officers advised

that the virtual tracker does help to be able to understand where the issues are so that they can be challenged.

- In respect of those pupils in Key Stage 4, Members queried what those children are doing now and whether they are being supported. Members were advised that the data on progression was good, the data forms part of the Cardiff Commitment data and can be provided. Members requested whether data over a longer period could be provided.

26 : REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEETING FREQUENCY

The Chairperson welcomed Gill Nurton (Committee & Member Services Manager) to the meeting to present the report which outlines the current terms of reference and frequency of meetings. Members were also advised that the Democratic Services Committee was undertaking a review of Elected Role Descriptions to include developing a Role Description for both the Chair and Members of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

The Committee were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members discussed the frequency of meetings; the amount of business currently on the agenda and further work they wished to undertake and whilst accepting that increasing the number of meetings to 6 per year would require more officer resource, they felt it was necessary.
- Members discussed the terms of reference and the need for those to be reviewed. A sub group would be set up to review those terms of reference.
- Members were advised by Emma Phipps-Magill that there is a Welsh Government event taking place in Llandrindod Wells on 15 November 2018 which will showcase the work undertaken by the ministerial outcome group for looked after children. Voices will be sharing the progress and consultation information on the new guidance for Corporate Parents. That information can be fed back to Members at the time of the next meeting.
- Members discussed the attendance at meetings and the need to ensure that all elected Members have received the required training.

RESOLVED:

1. To review the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee, and that the review is undertaken by a sub group.
2. To note that the final terms of reference will need to be agreed by the Committee prior to submission to Full Council for ratification;
3. To increase the frequency of meetings to 6 per annum;

4. To note that the Democratic Services Committee is undertaking a review of Elected Role Descriptions to include developing a Role Description for both the Chair and Members of the Corporate parenting Advisory Committee.

27 : MEMBER WORK STREAM UPDATES

Councillor Hinchey provided Members with an update. In relation to improving outcomes for Children he advised that there was a lot of working going on across Children's Services at the present time and confirmed that there had been an increase from 1 home in 2017 to 5 homes by 2018/19

On the 11 October Cabinet approved a new delivery model for Family Help and Support in Cardiff. It allows a fundamental change of how the Council channels Children's Services enquiries through the MASH.

28 : MEMBER VISIT UPDATES

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

29 : BRIEFING REPORTS

30 : QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT PRESENTATION

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

31 : QUARTER 1 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

32 : CROSSLANDS REGULATION 32 REPORTS

The reports in respect of this item were considered exempt from publication as they contained exempt information of the description in Paragraph 12 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The public be excluded for consideration of the item; and
- (ii) The content of the report be noted.

(a) Ty Storrie Regulation 32 Reports

The reports in respect of this item were considered exempt from publication as they contained exempt information of the description in Paragraph 12 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The public be excluded for consideration of the item; and
- (ii) The content of the report be noted.

33 : ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Members discussed the draft Annual Report. It was agreed that the report would be provided to Cabinet for information purposes only.

34 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

35 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee is on Tuesday 29 January 2019 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting terminated at 4.25 pm

Cardiff Children's Services – Adolescent Services

Service Report

A report outlining the remit, current activity and performance of the teams within Children's Services' focused on working with adolescents. This report will also outline areas for improvement and proposed next steps.



Working for Cardiff,
working together



Overview

Cardiff Children's Services recognised that working with adolescents required a bespoke and different approach. Evidence shows;

- There is a cohort of young people in their teenage years for whom the risk of family breakdown is high.
- In the unlikely event that these young people become looked after, our experience suggests that they are more likely to require specialist fostering or residential placements in order to safely manage the entrenched challenging behaviour that many of these young people display.
- There is limited availability for such placements locally and consequently these young people are more likely to be placed a distance from Cardiff.
- These placements face huge financial costs on the local authority, not to mention the emotional costs to these young people of being placed away from family and friends and their local community.
- Adolescents need workers who are available, consistent and who are able to meet their changing needs. Young people and their families need a timely response in order to help them feel supported, to change behaviour and prevent escalation with the aim of reducing crisis and develop families' ability to manage.
- It is essential to work 'with; adolescents to help keep them safe rather than doing 'to' them.
- Early Help Strategy and Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) reiterate that intervening as early as possible would produce better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

In response to the identified needs, we now have a number of teams specifically working with adolescent young people and their families who are at risk.

Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC) – Provides intensive therapeutic support to young people and their families at risk of being looked after who present such a challenge that they would be likely to otherwise be placed in external agency placements. This service offers integrated support in partnership with key organisations such as health, education, youth service and housing. The ARC also provides access to planned overnight short breaks provision.

Think Safe! – Provide specialist interventions with children and young people most at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation. The team also deliver preventative group work and training in partnership with universal services. The team remit it also broadening to cover other forms of exploitation.

11+ Case Management Team – offering relationship based social work practice with a specific adolescent approach.

Core Values

These teams work to a set of core values that are essential when working with young adolescents and their families.

1. Understand adolescence as a development stage and what that means for an individual young person
2. Recognise young people as experts on their own lives and that they are the key resource
3. Enable families to work together, rebuild supportive relationships and building resilience by taking a whole family approach
4. Through assertive outreach, build protective, nurturing relationships between a young person and their worker, recognising that trust needs to be earned.
5. Recognise the risks and work with a wide network of multi-agency partners to disrupt and address them
6. Provide a skilled, responsive workforce that values young people and their contribution

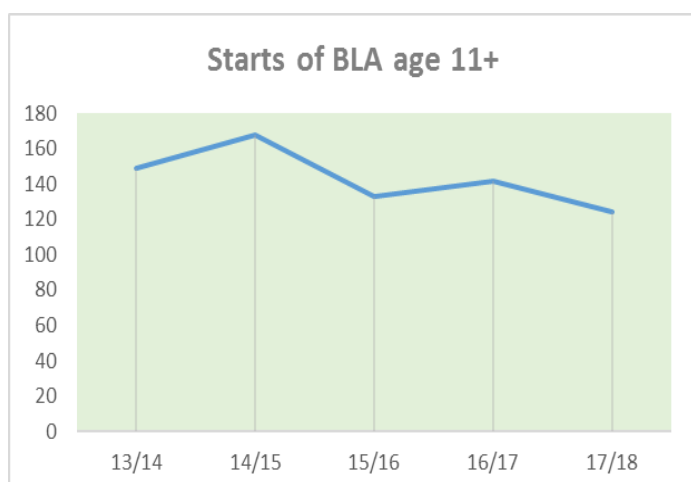
Looked After Children – Performance Data

The Looked After Children Population as of the end of October 2018 was 882. This is a significant increase in the number of looked after children since the last reported figures of 796 in October 2017. The numbers that become looked after in the 11+ age group is however decreasing. Since the published figures in 2013/14 there has been an overall decrease of 16.78% in the numbers of children becoming looked after between the ages of 11-19.

	c) 11-15	d) 16-17	Total
Diff 13/14 to 17/18	-10	-15	-25
%	-12.66%	-21.43%	-16.78%

Starts of BLA by Age Range

	c) 11-15	d) 16-17	Total
13/14	79	70	149
14/15	101	67	168
15/16	71	62	133
16/17	71	71	142
17/18	69	55	124
18/19 q1-3	34	41	75
Totals	425	366	791



Adolescent Resource Centre

- Based in a dedicated centre in Neville Street which offers a safe space for young people and families to engage in the therapeutic intervention on offer.
- Provides whole family support both centre based and in families homes.
- Offers support on evenings and weekends to ensure the service is responsive to the needs of the families.
- uses a range of programmes and support that is based on enhancing the strengths within the family and assessing the motivation for change

Criteria

- Young people aged 11+ who have been assessed as having complex needs that are deemed edge of care and place the family unit at risk of breaking down. The young person will have an allocated Social Worker and a clear assessment and plan that identifies the outcome for both the young person and the family.
- The behaviour displayed in both the family home and the community is likely to place the young person at risk of being accommodated.
- The behaviours displayed by the young person are likely to place family members at risk of physical and emotional harm.
- Family are willing to engage in intensive intervention.
- Not an emergency service FISS Rapid Response and Duty System will hold the case until above criteria is met.

Caseload

Caseload for ARC support workers is up to 6 cases to enable intensive, targeted, therapeutic work.

Referral Process

- ARC manager will hold a consultation with the Social Worker to ensure ARC is the correct service for the family.
- If ARC referral is agreed, Social Worker will complete the referral and send to the ARC manager for allocation.
- If agreed the case will be allocated within 2 working days, dependant on capacity, and the allocated worker will undertake a further assessment with the family and prepare them for the multi-agency meeting.
- A multi agency meeting (MAM) is held within 5 working days of allocation to ratify the assessment, family goals and interventions, identify roles, tasks, responsibilities and timescales.
- The outcome of the multi agency meeting should be an agreement by young person, family and agencies of what intervention will be offered over the initial 12 weeks of ARC involvement.
- Schedule is reviews on a 2-3 week basis.

Multi agency meeting membership.

- Youth Offending Service
- Youth Service
- Education

Available Interventions

- Cookery
 - Music and art therapy
 - Family therapy
 - Specialist health worker support
 - 1:1 targeted intervention
 - 1:1 and group work parenting interventions (triple P, nurturing, attachments, NVR)
 - C-card
- The option to access any of our therapist is voluntary and can be done with or without parents, carers or family members
 - The service is open to the family and young person until they feel they no longer need the service
 - The aim of therapy is to help work through any issues, and to help other family members to understand.

ARC Short Breaks

- One respite support worker is contracted who offers her home for one or two night a week as agreed to a young person.
- Respite is agreed and is part of a plan not an emergency placement
- The purpose of support is to offer a safe space for the young person to reflect and think about what they would like to change. Arc Short Breaks worker offers support within her home, and this could be to explore safe relationships, personal care and what they would like to happen.

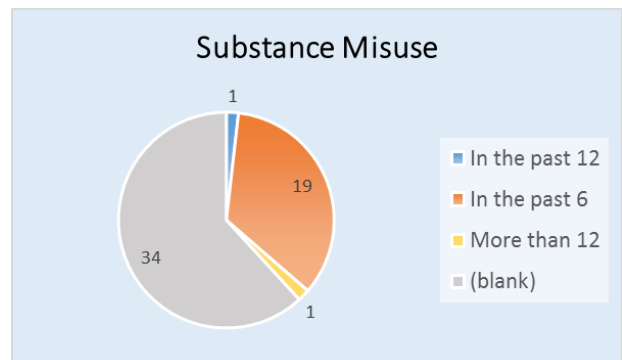
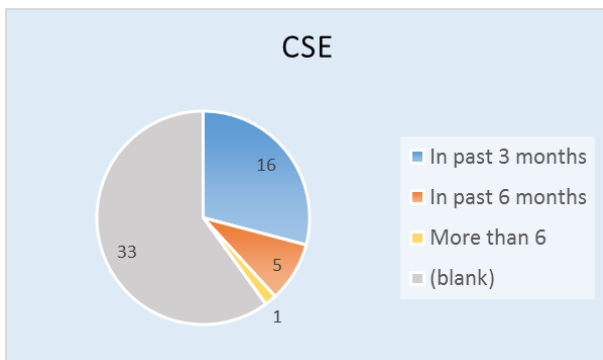
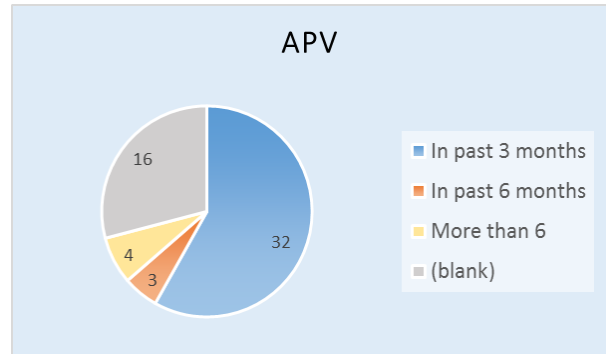
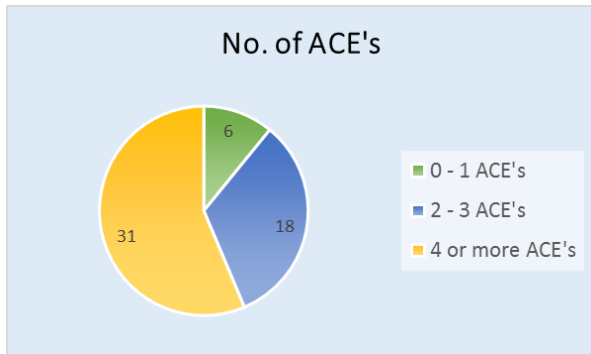
Service Strengths

- Multi agency approach to working with adolescents
- Support for as long as it's needed
- Specialist Interventions available 'on tap'
- Intensive nature of the service delivered

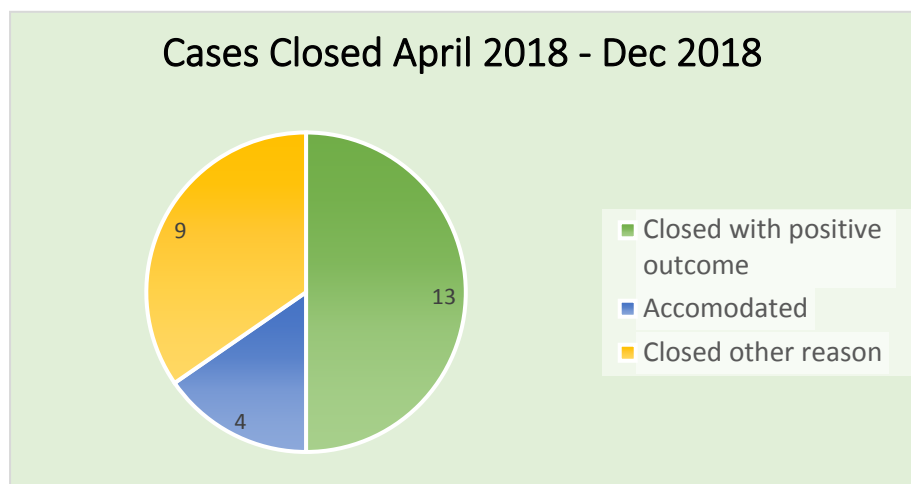
Performance Data

Since March 2018 ARC have received **68** referrals. Out of this **55** were accepted for ARC intervention.

The below graphs give an indication of the range of issues those 55 young people presented with.



Of the 55 young people accepted for ARC intervention, **26** of those cases are now closed. The below charts demonstrate the outcome.



29 cases are still open and receiving ARC intervention. Of these 29 **2** cases have been accommodated and **7** cases are currently receiving therapy.

ARC Case Study

H and family came to the UK in 2014, after fleeing Domestic Violence. H was referred to the Adolescent Resource Centre in April 2018. H was excluded from school for carrying a weapon, and her behaviour deteriorated significantly. H was diagnosed with ADHD, and struggled to regulate her emotions. H was going missing, and was at high risk of sexual exploitation. H was associating with older males, and was misusing drugs and alcohol. Behaviour at home was often very challenging, with physical altercations between H and her Mum, leading to the Police being called. H would also self-harm on a regular basis, and was admitted to hospital, following an overdose. H was regularly misusing her mobile phone, talking to older males, and sending images of herself, and getting into arguments on social media, with dangerous repercussions.

H did a piece of work with the Think Safe! Team to raise her awareness of CSE, and online safety. H worked with ARC, exploring her emotions and anger management, and this was further explored via Art Therapy, which H still continues to attend, and feels it helps her. ARC also did some work with H around her identity, looking at some of the foundations of life story work.

ARC worked with H's Mum on rules and boundaries, and completed some elements of the Nurturing Attachments Programme. Both H and Mum worked extremely well with ARC, always engaging and attending appointments. ARC closed the case in December 2018.

11+ Case Management Team

Offering relationship based social work practice in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014)

Criteria

Care and Support Part 4&6, Child Protection Plans. 11+ team support children and families under;

- Care and support part 4, part 6 when the plan is reunification not under the Public Law Outline (Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act 2014)
- Children subject to Child Protection Plans (All Wales Child Protection Procedures, 2008)
- Many of the children are subject to the strategy meeting process under the addendum protocols; part 5 of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (Child sexual Exploitation, Criminal Exploitation, Sexually Harmful Behaviour and Modern Day Slavery)
- Children subject to Care Proceedings or PLO will not transfer to the 11+ team. At the point that PLO or Care Proceedings are instigated, the child will transfer to targeted services.

- Sibling groups open for child protection / care and support needs to targeted services do not meet the remit of the team, due to the CP concerns for parenting.
- The team cannot respond to new or step up crises for young people not allocated to the 11+ team for example from MASH or Support 4 Families.

Caseload

Social Workers will have a maximum of 12 children allocated (individual children, not family groups) the amount of work generated by the children on the caseload is high and the Social Workers must be responsive dealing with frequent, unplanned events.

Transfer in points

- Intake and Assessment
- Targeted Services
- 14+ team
- Support 4 Families (also a step down point)
- CHAD

Service Strengths

- Social Workers having the time to manage, respond to and pre-empt high-risk edge of care crisis work.
- Stable team committed to working with teenagers.
- A team who understand the needs of young people and able to build a good rapport and create change.

Performance Data

111	cases
51	ended
60	open
2	Long term care (subject to care proceedings)
1	Long term care (possible return home)
2	Looked after (rehab home)

Case study

S became looked after at 15 ½ . He lived at home with his mum and sister prior to this. S had a statement of educational needs and hadn't attended school for 2 years when he became looked after, due to drug misuse. S was described as impossible to engage and no one had a meaningful relationship with him, in spite of a child protection plan. S was aggressive at home, was dealing drugs, high level offending and criminal exploitation. It got so bad the family experienced physical harm from drug dealers at their home. S had experiences domestic violence as a child and there were no boundaries. Family relationships were really fraught with dad and adult siblings and mum.

S became looked after following intensive support to build his trust by his social worker as mum could not cope any longer. S went from talking to no one to agreeing to a move to a placement. This was through the trusting relationship.

S is now happy in placement. He doesn't use drugs. He doesn't go missing. S is following the boundaries and talking positively about his future. S sees his family regularly.

Whilst S is looked after, we believe if he had relationship based, targeted social work support earlier, the accommodation could have been prevented. Now the 11+ team is established, this support can be offered to other young people.

S is now spending unsupervised family contact with family and we are working hard to rebuild relationships with his family and supporting all members to repair relationships and further build on S's progress. S feels much happier and is feeling a part of the family once again. Rehabilitation is constantly being reviewed.

Think Safe!

- Specialist direct work interventions for children most at risk of Child Exploitation.
- Timely allocation and specialist support.
- Relationship based practice aimed to improve children's knowledge, resilience and self esteem
- Also deliver preventative programmes including group sessions and the Think Safe Ambassadors Programme.

Ambassadors Programme

- 19 young people from 7 Secondary schools took part in the CSE Prevention Ambassadors project which is a Peer Education Project for schools.
- The aim was for participants to gain an awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation, inform Children's Services what the key CSE prevention messages are from a young person's perspective and as CSE Prevention Ambassadors for their schools, advise on how these messages can be delivered best.
- Ambassadors were also set a challenge where they were asked to design a school project that raises awareness around the issues of CSE.

Caseload

Maximum caseload of 10 per worker.

Referral

Referrals are generated through CSE MASM process and through conversations with the allocated social worker if there is an unmet need to prevent CSE.

Service Strengths

- Non Social Work relationship leads to positive engagement
- Weekly visits that build a trusting relationship that enhances safety and wellbeing
- No other role can provide this regular targeted support.
- Support can be offered for as long as needed and is not time limited.

Case Study

M was 15 when she was referred to Children's Services due to significant CSE. M had a complex and traumatic childhood. She was living with her aunt who was committed to her. M was functioning significantly younger than her age. M had links with the homeless community due to her childhood.

Adults were giving M drugs, taking her around the city (trafficking) and it is strongly suspected she was sexually exploited. M was regularly missing.

A multi-agency plan was put in place and regularly reviewed (CSE MASM) The police undertook significant disruptive work to keep M safe. A Think Safe! worker, alongside the multi agency team worked with M for 9 months. Over this time M learnt about CSE, how to keep safe and what a healthy relationship is. The work was intensive on a weekly basis and the TS! Worker undertook robust safety planning with M and the adults around her.

M is now safe, she didn't experience any further CSE. M is looking forward to college. M was able to keep herself safe and she had a nurturing network around her. M was helped to achieve her goals and develop healthy friends and interests.

Identified areas for development.

- **Look to aligning the teams to make one cohesive edge of care 'adolescent service' for Cardiff**

Consultation is currently underway with the teams to explore a new vision for the future. Staff believe that there is a need for an alignment of the services in place for adolescents in order to have improved clarity of roles and responsibilities, reduce duplication of workload and provide a clear service identity for young people, families and key partners. This will also build resilience in the team coming together to have one 'duty' system.

Edge of Care

Services and activities can often bridge service structures and operate at the intersection between targeted and statutory provision for children and families.

- **Develop a robust 'working model' for the service.**

Clear systems and processes and effective preventative and crisis management structures need to be built into a working model. This will ensure that the staff teams remain focused on what they are there to achieve. For example a duty system and rapid response support will ensure that staff can concentrate on delivering the planned interventions as opposed to 'fighting fires' and responding to crisis. Having clear and well communicated referral mechanisms will ensure young people and their families are receiving the right level of support at the right time.

- **Develop a consistent and effective outcomes framework and associated tools to measure outcomes effectively.**

Carefirst currently collects data regarding how many cases are worked with, however it is recognised that more needs to be done to effectively measure and showcase the impact and difference the services are having on young people and their families. Development of a new outcomes framework for the team is currently underway and it is hoped that Results Based Accountability methodology can be applied to ensure the difference we are making is effectively measured, as well as ensuring 'the story behind the baseline' is represented.

Preventative work is difficult to measure and no one can know what may or may not have happened if the interventions and support were not in place. What we can do is look at risk factors and draw on the wealth of evidence and expertise that shows by making certain changes and improvements the risks *will* reduce.

- **Enhanced workforce development to ensure consistent models of working / use of evidence based approaches**

The teams are highly skilled and trained in a variety of evidence based approaches and tools a robust staff training package is required to ensure consistency of approaches and continuous development of staff. All staff use a strengths based Signs of safety approach which we are fully committed to and hope to develop further.

➤ **Improve links with Early Help/prevention Service**

With the launch of the Early Help gateway and the various levels of support and intervention within that service, work will be done to ensure there is connectivity between Early Help and the adolescent services. This will ensure effective step up and step down systems, avoid duplication of work and foster a clear and open approach for young people and families.

➤ **Broaden the scope of Think Safe! To include other forms of exploitation.**

A huge amount of work has been done in Cardiff to raise public and professional understanding and awareness of child sexual exploitation. A similar approach needs to be taken with other forms of exploitation. An exploitation strategy is in development for Cardiff and the Vale and the Think Safe! team will play an integral part in supporting this.

➤ **Increase the scope of therapies on offer for young people and their families.**

To enable a wider range of therapies available to young people and families to engage and target their interests.

➤ **Increase the availability of 'short breaks' support**

Currently the service has access to one short breaks worker. This can cause issues with capacity and availability. The aim is to increase the number of workers in order to be able to offer this provision to more young people who need it.

➤ **Improve mechanisms to involve young people and their families in the design, development and continuous improvement of services**

Consulting with young people and families and involving them in all decisions made is the core business of all teams, however additional methods to capture their thoughts feelings and ideas regarding the services they have received will be further developed.

➤ **Ensure we are an integral part of delivering a 'Child Friendly City' and are committed to ensuring children and young people are accessing their rights and we are working in a rights based approach.**

Children and young people needs and rights will be at the heart of all work undertaken. We will work with the team to ensure they are aware and are working towards the 5 goals laid out in the Cardiff Child Friendly Strategy.

Proposed Next Steps

- **Consult on proposals to better align the 'adolescent services'**
- **Work with management team to implement the areas for development identified.**
- **Work with the performance team to quantify what data can be collected and ensure that this can feed into robust performance monitoring processes.**

Appendix

- **Current Staff Structure**
- **Draft outcomes Framework**

**Adolescent Service
Current Staff Structure**

Tudalen 24

Operational Manager

Team Manager
Grade 10

ARC Team Manager
Grade 9

Principle Social
Worker 11+
Grade 9

Think Safe Team
Manager
Grade 9

ARC Social Worker
Grade 8

Social Worker
Grade 8

Social Worker
Grade 8

Think Safe
Worker x 4 FTE
Grade 5

Senior
Support
Worker
Grade 6

Senior
Support
Worker
Grade 6

Volunteer
Coordinator
Grade 6

Health
Intervention
Specialist

Social Worker
Grade 7

Social Worker
Grade 7

Social Worker
Grade 7

Support Workers X 9.5 FTE
Grade 5

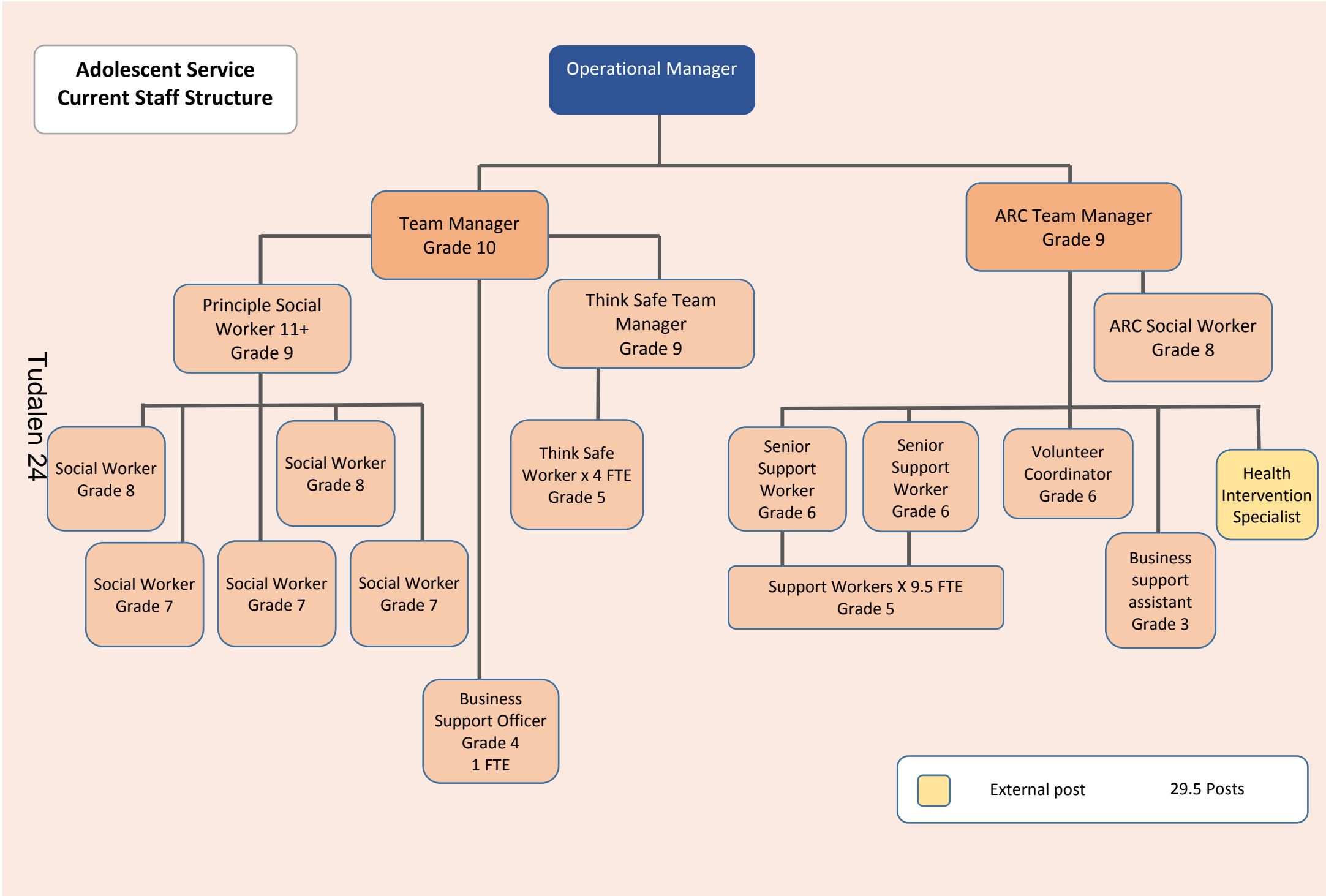
Business
support
assistant
Grade 3

Business
Support Officer
Grade 4
1 FTE



External post

29.5 Posts



Children's Service Business Plan	Adolescent Service Outcomes	Service Aims - Make positive CHANGES in young people age 11-25 and their families.	Performance measures	How is outcome achieved	Evidence to support outcome
Children and Young people are supported to live safely within their families with the lowest appropriate level of intervention.	1. Reduce the number of young people needing statutory intervention through early intervention and prevention.	Confident and resilient young people who have high self-esteem, feel good about themselves and an ability to bounce back from difficult episodes in their lives.	Improved resilience in young person		
			Improved self- esteem in young person		
			Improved mental wellbeing in young person		WEMBS Score improvement
	2. Reduce the number of young people being accommodated, and support them and their families to enable them to remain at home.	A functioning family and positive family relationships, ensuring family strengths are utilised.	Young people remain safely in the family home.		
	3. Reduce the number of adolescents being subject to legal proceedings		Improved family relationships		
			Improved communication within the family.		
			Improved Family resilience		
	4. Reduce the number of adolescents being subject to child protection plans.		Improved parenting skills		
				young people / family know where to get help if needed.	
	5. Reduce the number of adolescents in children's homes, by providing support to young people and their foster carers to remain in their placements.			Primary goals set and achieved	
				Secondary goals set and achieved	
	6. Reduce the risk of exploitation in adolescent young people			Young person feels listened to.	
				Young person feels confident to make positive decisions that effect their lives.	
				Young people are aware of the forms of exploitation and the signs to spot.	
				Young people are attending school.	

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Child Practice Review Report

Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Safeguarding Children Board

Extended Child Practice Review C&V LSCB02/2014

Brief outline of circumstances resulting in the Review

To include here: -

- *Circumstances resulting in the review*
- *Time period reviewed and why*
- *Summary timeline of significant events to be added as an annex*

Legal Context:

This Extended Child Practice Review has been commissioned by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Local Safeguarding Children Board. The criteria for this Review were met under section 6.1 of Guidance for Arrangements for Multi Agency Child Practice Reviews (WG 2013)

A Board must undertake an extended child practice review in any of the following cases where, within the area of the Board, abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and the child has:

- (a) died; or
- (b) sustained potentially life threatening injury; or
- (c) sustained serious and permanent impairment of health or development

and

The child was on the Child Protection Register and/or was a Looked After Child (including a care leaver under the age of 18) on any date during the 6 months preceding:

- the date of the event referred to above
- the date on which the Local Authority or relevant partner identifies that a child has sustained serious and permanent impairment of health and development.

The criteria for extended reviews are laid down in revised regulations, The Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Wales) Regulations 2006 as amended 2012.

Circumstances Resulting in the Review:

This Extended Child Practice Review (ECPR) was commissioned following a recommendation from the Child Practice Review Subgroup of the Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Children Board. It considers the circumstances of a young girl who was and remains subject of a Care Order to the Local Authority and had been placed in a residential care home out of Wales. Prior to this she had been in a residential care home in Wales as well as having been looked after in a number of foster placements. She was vulnerable in a number of ways: she was/is subject to a statement of educational needs; her behavior was unpredictable and made her vulnerable as she often went missing from her placements. She could be challenging and uncooperative and she did not appear to have close relationships with her peers and was in many ways considered immature for her age.

Her younger sibling is also the subject of a Care Order to the Local Authority and for some time they were in a foster placement together. Apart from her younger sister the child has two half-brothers, both older than her. Contact with her birth family, particularly with her parents is not consistent. She does have a close bond with her maternal grandmother. She can be very resourceful and it was to her grandmothers 'she ran to' when she went missing from her placement in England taking a day on one occasion and two days on another to make her way to her grandmothers address.

A feature of this young person's behavior throughout the period of this review was her propensity to 'go missing/run away' from her placements. On occasions she would return to her placement of her own free will, albeit the police were frequently involved.

As a direct consequence of the relationships she was allowed to form with other young people in the latter residential care home, led to her being vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation which resulted in her being subjected to two separate sexual attacks upon her with the latter being a rape which resulted in her being hospitalised

Children Services had adopted their agreed tendering processes when attempting to locate a placement for the child. They were satisfied that the residential care home where the child was placed was appropriate to meet all of her needs. Following the attacks which she had been subjected to whilst being a resident at that home, Children Services had no reason to believe that the care home itself was not a suitable placement for her. However following a communication from a Police Force in England with Children Services, they voiced their concerns about the placement, explaining the risks involved in returning the child to the home. During the discussion the police mentioned that if a decision was made to return the child they would invoke their Powers of Police Protection. Children Services clearly listened to and assessed the information received from the police regarding the risks posed to the child within the care home setting. As a consequence of that discussion together with the information in respect of the attacks on the child a further risk assessment was conducted by Children Services. From that assessment Children Services decided to apply for and was successful in obtaining a three month Secure Order to place the child in secure accommodation for her own safety.

She has since been placed in a residential care home in West Wales with three other children, including her younger sister. She is settled and making progress, and having contact with her family.

The Child Practice Review Sub Group first raised this referral in January 2014. Following that meeting the Chair of that subgroup made contact with the relevant LSCB in England concerning the referral.

Representatives at a subsequent meeting were satisfied, that due to the Looked After Children status of the child the criteria for an Extended Review of the child was met. Further dialogue also took place between Cardiff and the Vale LSCB and the relevant LSCB in England and by the meeting dated 17th November 2014 it was noted and accepted that it is the responsibility of the placing authority to undertake the Child Practice Review due to their accountability for the welfare of the child. As a consequence on that same day it was decided that the CPRSG would recommend to Cardiff and the Vale LSCB that an extended child practice should be commissioned as a consequence of the multi-agency involvement with the child. Agencies involved from the English region have fully engaged in the CPR process.

At the first meeting of the Child Practice Review Panel (CPRP) it was agreed that the scope for this ECPR would be for the two years leading up to the event which triggered this review i.e. from 16th October 2011 to 16th October 2013, it is acknowledged there was a significant delay in commencing this review.

The Terms of Reference for the Review can be found at Appendix1

Practice and organisational learning

Identify each individual learning point arising in this case (including highlighting effective practice) accompanied by a brief outline of the relevant circumstances

The Learning Event

There were a number of themes identified through the work of the Panel and during the event.

The Learning Event was attended by 13 practitioners in addition to the Panel Chair, the two reviewers and the LSCB Business Manager. With permission of the participants the Learning Event was recorded to enable the Reviewers to ensure discussions and decisions are accurately reflected in this report.

The following practitioners were in attendance.

- 2 Looked after Children Nurses
- 2 Police Officers from South Wales Police
- Team Manager for Looked After Children 14+ team.
- Team Manager Children's Services
- Social Worker for the Child
- 3 Representatives from Education
- 2 Police Officers from the Police Force involved from England
- An English Local Authority's Children Services

The views of the young person

The Reviewers met with the young person in her current placement in a residential home in Wales prior to the Learning Event to seek her views as to the services provided to her.

The child was seen in the lounge. She sat curled up in an armchair but did make eye contact.

She told the reviewers:

She was annoyed at the number of times she was moved although she understood it was to keep her safe and she didn't mind being so far away from home. She was happy that she was now in a placement with her sister, as when she was placed elsewhere she missed her sister and wasn't allowed to see her or phone her Nan.

She demonstrated an understanding of her inappropriate behaviour and said she was treated well when she was held in police custody.

She told us she was annoyed when she was placed out of area that her Social worker was never available to talk to and she was never visited by her, and that she

wanted to see her family more. She spoke very positively about her current social worker.

The Reviewers also met with the maternal grandmother at her home prior to the Learning Event to seek her views of the services provided to her granddaughter:

She consider that it was wrong that her grand-daughters had been separated when in foster care and considered that to do so was not in their best interests. She was upset that once her granddaughter was placed out of area she never saw her, she didn't know what was going on, professionals never contacted her and it wasn't until the child ran away that the family were first made aware of the 'sexual exploitation issues'.

She found contact with her grandchildren stressful as it was supervised and she hadn't been told this was going to happen. She noted that her granddaughters had had no contact with the extended family (cousins, etc.) saying they don't know who their family are.

She confirmed that all correspondence to the girl's mother is sent to her (grandmother's) address, but that she does not get communication in her own right so never knew what was going on as her daughter didn't tell her much.

During the discussions of the timeline the Practitioners noted the following:

- There was a varying level of knowledge in regard to the number of times the police had been involved due the child going missing, etc.
- School (Cardiff) appeared to be a place of stability.
- The young persons' behaviour in school was inconsistent, sometimes conforming and not at others. She could be unpredictable.
- Her personal appearance was very important to her but not always age appropriate.
- The 'Barometer of concern was considered to be 'medium to high'.
- In school she spent a good deal of time in the 'Nurture Class'.
- She did not meet the criteria for the acute services which were provided by (therapeutic) CAMHS what she required was a therapeutic service which CAMHS did not offer. It was noted that there had previously been a CAMHS Nurse who could have provided the necessary service but that service came to an end when the two LA merged. Practitioners identified that in their opinion a significant number of Looked After Children actually require a service that is no longer available. It was also the practitioner's view that it is often the carer that needs the support to manage children with difficult behaviours and again this is no longer available.
- The separation from her sibling had a major impact on her, albeit her sibling felt she was being held back by the index child.
- Practitioners felt that the introduction of a mobile phone for this particular child at that time may have been an unwise decision as suddenly she had 'lots of friends'.

- Concerns escalated from January 2013 onwards when the young person became very 'disengaged'.
- The legal duty to always find a school place for a child is not easy in reality especially with out of county placements.
- Health professionals identified they do not always get informed when a child is moved out of county.
- There was little understanding of the tendering process for Out of County Placements by partner agencies other than the Local Authority.
- Concerns about the quality of information transferred in relation to health when a child moves as Looked After Children Nurses do not do this themselves.
- If the child is not statemented there can be a delay in sharing information
- Lack of an All Wales Notification Process for transferring children out of county, the police being aware of the 1st out of County Placement but not the 2nd which impacted on the information sharing.
- Issue raised around moving a child from one area where there is a service provision to another area where this not i.e. Caterpillar Service.
- Lack of clarity of between what was fact, observation, allegation and opinion
- Dealing with the surface issues and not drilling down to the cause of the child going missing this may be appropriate to be carried out by someone independent. Practitioners identified it would have been beneficial if there had been a process for 'missing person debriefs'. Statutory guidance on children who go missing from home (s.7 Local Authority Act 1970 paragraph 69 and accompanying flow chart places an obligation on the Local Authorities to offer an independent return interview. Whilst this is applicable in England it does not appear to be the same in Wales. The All Wales Protocol on Missing Children Paragraph 6.4 is not as prescriptive and states that the interviewer could be a police officer, social worker, teacher or independent person. This can be confusing and all agencies need to be aware of those differences.
- Looked After Children Nurse triggered a SERAF (Score 36).
- There was confusion between agencies with regard to whether a CSE strategy meeting had taken place.
- Lack of family involvement in Looked After Children Reviews.
- Young person had four changes of placement in a very short time.
- The out of area placement was seen as an appropriate placement having had a good Ofsted report albeit from a police perspective the number of young people who went missing from the placement was disproportionately high and No SERAF undertaken there. (NB: Although this provision remains open it no longer specialises as a placement for children at risk of CSE.)
- There is a need for clear and well understood communication pathways.
- Professionals expressed their concerns about appropriate adults being available to juveniles in custody (especially out of hours).

Effective practice in inter-agency collaboration

- There were appropriate links between foster carers and the pastoral care team
- Her learning difficulties were widely acknowledged and appropriate support was offered.

- Police Force involved in England noted they have a missing person's co-ordinator so when a child is placed who causes concern re missing episodes there is a central person who is the link.
- There was effective communication between Forces as well as agencies at the point of the child being reported as missing and as a consequence of that communication as well as the effective intelligence systems the child was recovered expeditiously.
- Whilst the separation of the siblings in this case may have proved not to have been the best course of action, there was clear evidence of significant consultation between representatives from all agencies to ensure that the decision was well informed and would stand scrutiny having considered the impact that it would have on both children.
- There is evidence from the initial disclosure of the rape allegation of a thorough and robust investigation where the child's needs were met by effective protocols being adhered to as well as the effective communication between the three Police Forces involved which led to a prompt and effective arrest of the perpetrator.
- The effective communication between the English Police Force and Cardiff Children Services with regard to the accommodation in England not being a suitable placement for the child. The police in that area were so concerned about the placement that they confirmed they would be invoking Powers of Police Protection in respect of the child if she was returned. Children Services listened and risk assessed the entire situation and as a consequence a Secure Care Order was obtained to allow the child to be placed into secure accommodation thereby ensuring that she was kept safe.
- When the child was placed into an out of county placement in the South Wales Police area there was evidence of good communication and information sharing between the Missing Person Co Coordinator in South Wales Police and the South Wales Police officers in the placement area which evidences that providing agencies know about the placements appropriate measures can be put into place to respond accordingly. This was evidenced in the missing episodes.

Improving Systems and Practice

In order to promote the learning from this case the review identified the following actions for the LSCB and its member agencies and anticipated improvement outcomes:-

During the course of the Learning Event the practitioners engaged in an open and proactive manner. A number of learning points were identified which have led to the following actions being identified. Most of these learning points hinge on the importance of appropriate and timely information sharing. It needs to be noted, information sharing has frequently been identified as a failure in numerous reviews of the Serious Case Review process over the last two decades.

Understanding the tendering process for Out of County Placements and whether there is a choice/making the right choice

There was a lack of understanding across agencies in this regard and the Local Authority identified that when an out of county placement is put out to tender it may be that there is just one placement that tenders rather than there being a choice.

It was noted that as far as the residential placement this child had had both local to Wales and out of county, none of them were represented at the Learning Event and this was because they are no longer in existence. It was also noted these placements are usually private businesses. It is essential that the services provided when looking for placements for children meet the needs of the child. This child needed a therapeutic placement but the out of area placement was not such a placement albeit claimed to be as they had access to a peripatetic therapist. It is noted that The Local Authority have already undertaken a Review of this establishment

Before a child is placed there should be pre-placement multi -agency discussions with that area. It was identified that children's services would not as a matter of course speak to the police into the receiving area, it is suggested this should be part of the process as The Police Force where the child was placed knew how many children went missing from that residential home. If this had been known by Cardiff it is likely this child would not have been placed there.

Sharing information about a child who has had episodes of 'going missing'

This young person had had numerous episodes of going missing when she was resident in the Cardiff and Vale area, when such a child is placed out of county it is essential these behaviours are drawn to the attention of the receiving area.

Review the role of the missing person's co-ordinator

Consideration should be given to reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the four Missing Persons Co-ordinator across South Wales Police and it is recommended that this is done through discussion with the English Police Force involved, the other Welsh Forces and the National College of Policing to ensure a more corporate approach and to have an understanding of the different levels of interventions/processes in the respective areas.

The importance of effective transfer of information when a child is placed out of area and there are concerns in relation to being vulnerable to sexual exploitation

CSE procedures in Wales came into force towards the end of 2012. But the receiving placement stated they didn't have any information from Cardiff in relation to this young person's vulnerability. It needs to be noted the CSE procedures are an enhancement of the existing child protection procedures.

However Cardiff LA did send information to the Residential Care Home Management Team in the receiving area, but not to the home itself which identified a communication issue between the Residential Care Home, Management Team and the home. During the Looked After Children Review general issues had been discussed but not specific details such as the number of missing episodes when the young person was in Cardiff.

A history of 'missing' should be actively shared with the receiving placement. (Similar to a MAPPA Process - again if effective multi agency transfer meetings (MATMS) take place such behaviours should be disclosed.

The importance of following through with assessments when concerns have been raised about the possibility of (sexual) exploitation

The timeline identified a number of occasions when professionals had made reference to their concerns that this young girl was vulnerable to exploitation yet these concerns did not lead to a full assessment of risk or any identified action plan to address the risks

Risk assessing giving a young vulnerable person a mobile phone

This young person, who was known to display vulnerable behaviours, was given a mobile phone as a 'present/reward'. This should have been discussed with her key worker and properly risk assessed.

Keeping family members who are considered as significant to the child appropriately informed of plans when they do not hold parental responsibility

The child's maternal grandmother was a significant person to this young girl, and as identified earlier, was the person she ran to on two occasions from her out of area placement. It was made clear during the discussion the reviewers had with the grandmother she did not understand the rationale for supervised contact or have any real understanding of the Care Plan or indeed why the child was subject to a Care Order. When this was explored during the Learning Event the reason given for this was because grandmother did not have parental responsibility albeit it was acknowledged she was a significant person in the child's life. It was also noted the child's mother did not always actively involve herself in meetings convened in relation to her children. Therefore it was unlikely she would keep the grandmother informed about the children's situation. When working with family members who are difficult to engage, it is important agreements are put in place to enable appropriate information can be shared with significant family members.

The need to take a holistic approach when considering changes of placement.

The implications of all agencies need to be discussed when considering out of county placements. In particular the educational need for a child is fundamentally important and it has been highlighted that the legal duty to always find a school place for a child is not easy in reality. Education need to be engaged in the decisions making process around out of county placements to ensure that there is an appropriate provision for the child and to allow for a smooth transition.

Looked After Children Nurses should receive notifications in advance to be able to comply with good practice and share information regarding out of area placements

There is not An All Wales Notification Process for the transferring of notes and or information and as a consequence it is incumbent upon Children Services to notify the

Looked After Children Nurse of the decision around changes in placement. This would allow the Looked After Children Nurse to effectively notify their counterparts in the placement area, as well as transfer the notes. This happened when the child was moved into the South Wales placement due to the effective communication but this failed when she moved to the placement in England.

The Voice of the Child

It is important that when decisions are being made in respect of the placements and the support and care for children that there is clear documented evidence that their own views and concerns are also being considered and addressed.

Independent De Briefs with regard to children who go missing and are identified as being vulnerable to CSE.

There is evidence from this case and from previous reviews that many children do not engage with the police following missing episodes and as a consequence there could be missed opportunities for effective intelligence gathering to protect the child and identify perpetrators of CSE. There is a clear need for this type of service provision to be put into place to establish if it will enhance the safeguarding around children.

Making use of 21st century technology

It is suggested, communication could have been enhanced if more use was made of available technology such as using skype calls/video conferencing, as face to face communication can be more effective than emails and phone calls.

Review the single point of contact for referrals of Out of County Placements

The learning event identified that there is a need for Local Authorities to have a single point of contact for the referring and receiving of information concerning Out of County Placements with the responsibility of acknowledging receipt of the same. This would ensure a smooth, effective and informed transfer of the child. This would also enhance the ability for partner agencies to access information should a concern be identified around an out of county placement child. The Local Authority have confirmed to the reviewers that there is a process that has been in place since 2007, this is a purely administrative function. The review identified that there was a need for the practitioners involved in the care of the child to be aware of that process and what information is shared, to enable them to effectively assess the ongoing needs and risk for the child which was absent in this case.

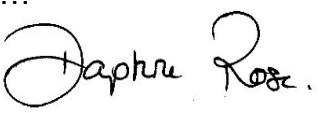
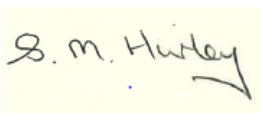

Strengthen approaches to supporting placement stability.

It was noted this young girl had a number of foster placement across the South Wales area prior to being transferred out of area. Each time she was moved it was because here behaviour was difficult for the carers to manage and on occasions after a move the child would decide she wanted to go back to the previous placement. The number of different placements was not conducive to the child's best interests. There is a need for appropriate and effective planning involving the child. There should be more

consideration given to exploring the need for extra support to the current placements to deal with the identified issues rather than solving the problem by moving the child.

Review of the All Wales Protocol for Missing Children

The All Wales Protocol for Missing Children is not prescriptive around whose responsibility it is to ensure that a missing child is interviewed and or offered an independent interview following his/her return unlike the procedures in England. This can lead to confusion especially with the cross border issues with missing children. This needs to be addressed in any subsequent revision of the procedures as otherwise everyone will think someone else is doing it.

Statement by Reviewer(s)	
<p>REVIEWER 1</p> <p>Daphne Rose Designated Nurse Safeguarding and Looked After Children Safeguarding Children Service Public Health Wales</p>	<p>REVIEWER 2</p> <p>Susan Hurley Independent Protecting Vulnerable Person Manager South Wales Police</p>
<p>Statement of independence from the case <i>Quality Assurance statement of qualification</i></p>	<p>Statement of independence from the case <i>Quality Assurance statement of qualification</i></p>
<p>I make the following statement that prior to my involvement with this learning review:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have not been directly concerned with the child or family, or have given professional advice on the case. • I have had no immediate line management of the practitioner(s) involved. • I have the appropriate recognised qualifications, knowledge and experience and training to undertake the review. • The review was conducted appropriately and was rigorous in its analysis and evaluation of the issues as set out in the Terms of Reference. 	<p>I make the following statement that prior to my involvement with this learning review:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have not been directly concerned with the child or family, or have given professional advice on the case. • I have had no immediate line management of the practitioner(s) involved. • I have the appropriate recognised qualifications, knowledge and experience and training to undertake the review. • The review was conducted appropriately and was rigorous in its analysis and evaluation of the issues as set out in the Terms of Reference.
<p>Reviewer 1 (Signature)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p>	<p>Reviewer 2 (Signature) S. Hurley</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>
<p>Chair of Review Panel (Signature)</p> <p>Name (Print)</p> <p>Date</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peter Greenhill</p> <p style="text-align: center;">16.03.2015</p>

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference

Index Child: Born 1999

The specific tasks of the Review Panel

- Identify and commission a reviewer/s to work with the review panel in accordance with guidance for concise and extended reviews.
- Agree the time frame for the review including any necessary reference to any significant background information or previous incident.
- Identify agencies, relevant services and professionals to contribute to the review not already requested by the Child Practice Review Sub Group, produce a timeline and an initial case summary and identify any immediate action already taken.
- The Panel determined that the appropriate agencies to be engaged in this review and therefore participate as members of the review panel are:
- Produce a merged timeline, initial analysis and hypotheses.
- Plan with the Reviewer/s a Learning Event for practitioners, to include identifying attendees and arrangements for preparing and supporting them pre and post event, and arrangements for feedback. Based upon the timeframe within which the Panel will conclude the review and the Learning Event will be scheduled for the 9th July 2015.
- Plan with the Reviewers contact arrangements with the child and her family members prior to the event. Advice will be sought about how to engage with the child subject to the review and any relevant family members.
- Receive and consider the draft child practice review report to ensure that the terms of reference have been met, the initial hypotheses addressed and any additional learning is identified and included in the final report.
- Agree conclusions from the review and an outline action plan, and make arrangements for presentation to the Child Practice Review Sub Group and the LSCB for consideration and agreement. (It is proposed that the report will be shared with the Child Practice Review Sub Group at its meeting scheduled for 8th September 2015 and at the LSCB meeting scheduled for 30th September 2015). It is proposed that the final report will be signed off by the end of September 2015 and submitted to Welsh Government in October 2015 at least 15 days prior to publication.
- Following the acceptance of the Child Practice Review Report by Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Children Board and Welsh Government the Reviewers will make arrangements with the child and family to share the report with them before it is published on the Boards website

Scope of Review:

At the first Panel meeting it was agreed that the start date for the scope of the review would be on 16th October 2011 – 16th October 2013. The Panel commissioned the following:

Chair of Panel - Peter Greenhill
External Reviewer - Daphne Rose
Internal Reviewer - Susan Hurley

Panel Members:

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan LSCB Partner Agencies:

Health: Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
Children Services: Cardiff Local Authority
Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority
Education Services: Cardiff Local Authority
Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority
South Wales Police

English region's LSCB Partner Agencies:

LSCB
Social Care
Police
NHS Foundation Trust
Learning and Achievement

Core Tasks

- Determine whether decisions and actions in the case comply with the policy and procedures of named services and LSCB.
- Examine inter-agency working and service provision for the child and family.
- Determine the extent to which decisions and actions were child focused.
- Seek contributions to the review from appropriate family members and keep them informed of key aspects of progress.
- Take account of any parallel investigations or proceedings related to the case.
- Hold a Learning Event for practitioners and identify required resources.

In addition, as this was an extended review, the Panel will have particular regard to the following:

- Was previous relevant information or history about the child and/or her family members known and taken into account in professionals' assessment, planning and decision-making in respect of the children, their family and their circumstances? How did that knowledge contribute to the outcome for the child?
- Was the child protection plan/looked after child plan for the child) robust and appropriate for the child and her circumstances?
- Was the plan for the child effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed? Did all agencies contribute appropriately to the development and delivery of the multi-agency plan(s)?
- What aspects of the plan(s) worked well, what did not work well and why? To what degree did agencies challenge each other regarding the effectiveness of the plan(s), including the progress against agreed outcomes for the child?
- Were there obstacles or difficulties in this case that prevented agencies from fulfilling their duties? This should include consideration of both organisational issues and other contextual issues?

The tasks of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

- To consider and agree any Board learning points to be incorporated into the final report or the action plan. This will take place no later than the scheduled meeting of the LSCB on 30th September 2015.
- To send the Final Report and Final Action Plan to relevant agencies for final comment before sign-off and submission to Welsh Government. This will be scheduled to take place in October 2015.
- To confirm arrangements for the management of the multi-agency action plan by the Child Practice Review Sub-Group, including how anticipated service improvements will be identified, monitored and reviewed.
- To plan the publication of the report on the LSCB website. The date of publication will be confirmed by the Chair of the LSCB Board.
- To agree dissemination process to agencies, relevant services and professionals.
- The Chair of the LSCB will be responsible for making all public comment and responses to media interest concerning the review until the process is completed.

Appendix 2 Summary Timeline

Appendix 3: Child Practice Review process

To include here in brief:

- *The process followed by the LSCB and the services represented on the Review Panel;*
- *A Learning Event was held and the services that attended.*

Family members' had been informed, their views sought and represented throughout the Learning Event and feedback had been provided to them.

The Panel met on 6 occasions with relevant personnel from the receiving region joining the Panel by telephone conference. Following the first Panel meeting timelines were produced by agencies and merged.

The young person and her family were offered the opportunity to meet with the Reviewers before the Learning Event so their thoughts and feelings about the way agencies worked with them would be considered at the Learning Event. The Reviewers met with the young person's Grandmother at her home, and with the young person in her accommodation.

The Learning Event was attended by 15 professionals who had been involved or worked with the young person. The timeline was used to inform the Learning Event where practitioners worked together to consider how effective the interagency working had been. They considered whether there needs to be changes in working practice to better protect children, or whether there had been missed opportunities to protect the young person from the abuse she suffered. The maternal grandmother and young person's thoughts, feelings and opinions that were shared with the reviewers were insightful and were shared at the appropriate points during the Learning Event and influenced the learning outcomes.

The Reviewers produced a draft report which was considered by the Panel. The final report was recommended to the Child Practice Review Subgroup and the Reviewers presented the Report to Cardiff and Vale SCB on the 30/9/15 the Chair of receiving region's SCB was in attendance.

For Welsh Government use only

Date information received

Date acknowledgment letter sent to LSCB Chair

Date circulated to relevant inspectorates/Policy Leads

Agencies	Yes	No	Reason
CSSIW	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Estyn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
HIW	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
HMI Constabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
HMI Probation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



Child Practice Review Action Plan

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Children Board

Extended Child Practice Review

Re: C&V RSCB 02/2014

1: Recommendations:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the tendering process for Out of County Placements and whether there is a choice/making the right choice The importance of effective transfer of information when a child is placed out of area and there are concerns in relation to being vulnerable to sexual exploitation Review the single point of contact for referrals of Out of County Placements. 					
Action: Multi-agency Panels from both the placing and receiving area ensure out-of-county placements meet children's needs and respond to identified risks		Agency/ Agencies	How progress and achievement will be measured	Lead Officer	Due Date
Background					
<p>The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (Part 6): Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 (CPPCR) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2015/1818/pdfs/wsi_20151818_mi.pdf and accompanying Code of Practice http://gov.wales/docs/phhs/publications/160106pt6en.pdf clearly set out the process for placing children out of county, including the need for a panel consisting of representatives from a number of service areas in both the placing and receiving Authorities (paras 183 – 201 apply, with additional guidance regarding emergency placements in paras 202 – 205).</p> <p>Learning from this case suggests where there are concerns around Child Sexual Exploitation, Police representatives from both the placing and receiving areas should also be involved in the Panel</p>		Children's Services, Education, Health, Police	<p>The relevant Children's Services Operational Managers/Principal Officers will report on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Panels held regarding out of county placements Number fully compliant with Regulations/Code of Practice Number of cases where Police have been involved following the identification of concerns around CSE Number of cases where escalation to Chief Executives of the Local Authority and Health Boards has been required (Code of Practice identifies this should occur where agreement of a placement cannot be reached (para 197) 	Operational Manager, Specialist Services (Cardiff); Principal Officer, (Vale)	

2: Recommendation: Review the role of the Missing Persons Co-ordinator				
Action: South Wales Police review the role of the Missing Persons Co-ordinator	Agency/ Agencies	How progress and achievement will be measured	Lead Officer	Due Date
Background:				
Consideration should be given to reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the four Missing Persons Co-ordinator across South Wales Police and it is recommended that this is done through discussion with other Welsh and English Forces and the College of Policing to ensure a more corporate approach and to have an understanding of the different levels of interventions/processes in the respective areas.	South Wales Police	A review report presented to the RSCB at November 2016 Executive and Main Board meetings. Jan 2019 update: A permanent full time Missing persons Team (South Wales Police) is now in place based at Cardiff Bay Police Station who deal with Missing Persons and CSE cases. The team work closely with Cardiff Council MASH officers.	TBC	Nov 2016

3: Recommendation: The importance of following through with assessments when concerns have been raised about the possibility of (sexual) exploitation					
Action: Ensure compliance with the All Wales Protocol for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children who are at Risk of Abuse through Sexual Exploitation		Agency/ Agencies	How progress and achievement will be measured	Lead Officer	Due Date
Background					
<p>In all cases where there are concerns around Child Sexual Exploitation, the All Wales Protocol for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children who are at Risk of Abuse through Sexual Exploitation http://gov.wales/docs/phhs/publications/160106pt6en.pdf must be followed.</p> <p>Current and ongoing RSCB, Children's Services and Welsh Government activity around training and awareness raising should ensure this matter is addressed</p>		All	<p>Data collected via the Welsh Government CSE data pilot/ongoing data collection.</p> <p>Jan 2019 update: Following the pilot activity referred to above, a wider Cardiff and Vale CSE Strategy was developed. This has now progressed to include Exploitation in all its forms, including Criminal Exploitation and Radicalisation, and to include Adults and Children. There has been regular and diverse training and awareness across all partners since this report. Cardiff now also has a dedicated social work team; Strategic Partnerships & Safeguarding-Think Safe who support children at risk of Exploitation</p>	RSCB Business Unit	At each Exec/Main Board meeting

4: Recommendation: Risk assessing giving a young vulnerable person a mobile phone				
Action: Develop and distribute an advisory note to highlight need for risk assessment regarding the provision of mobile phones and other technology as rewards	Agency/ Agencies	How progress and achievement will be measured	Lead Officer	Due Date
Background				
Written, comprehensive risk assessments should be undertaken when considering providing children and young people, especially those identified as having risks and vulnerabilities to CSE, with 'rewards' that may contribute to their vulnerability or increase potential risks. These could include: mobile phones, access to other technology (e.g. tablets, internet) and off-site trips	Children's Services, residential settings	Children's Services to develop and distribute an advisory notice for Children's Services staff, foster carers and staff and management of residential provision to raise awareness of potential risks Jan 2019 update: In Cardiff, individual risk assessments are undertaken for each child, and a decision is made as to what use of mobile phones can be agreed. On occasions, Cardiff Council have purchased 'pay as you go' phones for children to ensure they can be contacted when out in the community, and when on occasions they may have absconded or have been reported as missing. The use of mobile phones are not seen as 'rewarding' the child, but essential in order to keep them safe.	Debbie Martin-Jones (Cardiff) Ann Williams (Vale)	

5: Recommendation: Keeping family members who are considered as significant to the child appropriately informed of plans when they do not hold parental responsibility				
Action: Develop and distribute an advisory note, and related pro-forma in relation to sharing information with 'significant adults' who do not have Parental Responsibility	Agency/ Agencies	How progress and achievement will be measured	Lead Officer	Due Date
Background				

<p>In line with the duty in the Social Services and Well-being Act to “have due regard to Part 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)”, if requested by a child, and unless to do so could prove to be not in their best interests, a written agreement should be produced and agreed with adults who although not having Parental Responsibility (PR) are deemed as ‘significant’ by the child, to allow them to receive information on the child’s progress. This information may be limited due to legal requirements.</p>	<p>Children’s Services, IROs</p>	<p>Children’s Services to develop an advisory note for Social Workers and IROs.</p> <p>Children’s Services to develop a pro-forma written agreement for use with significant adults who do not have PR as to the content, timing, etc., of information they are able to receive</p> <p>Jan 2019 update: The new Care and Support Plans and related IRO documentation sets out who is important to the child. Information from the new Care and Support plans and IRO reporting now include the following questions and prompts/hints for staff:</p> <p><i>When will I have contact with my family and other important people? (Hint – This must include parents and anyone with PR and brothers or sisters (or step brothers or sisters) who are also looked after but not placed with the child)</i></p> <p><i>People who are not allowed to see or speak to me at the moment or who I do not want to see or speak to at this time?</i></p>	<p>Operational Manager, Specialist Services (Cardiff); Principal Officer, (Vale)</p>	<p>By Nov 2016</p>
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6: Recommendation: Independent de-briefs (return interviews) with regard to children who go missing and are identified as being vulnerable to CSE.				
Action: Ensure children and young people are provided with an independent de-brief after missing episodes and where they are identified as being vulnerable to CSE	Agency/ Agencies	How progress and achievement will be measured	Lead Officer	Due Date
Background				
An embedded Barnardos worker is now in place to conduct return interviews for children who go missing and are identified as being vulnerable to CSE.	South wales Police, Barnardos	Jan 2019 update: Following the initial pilot arrangements referred to the in the review report 2016 above, the post is now in place on a permanent basis and works closely with the Missing Persons team and the MASH in Cardiff bay Police Station		By Nov 2016

7: Recommendation: Making use of 21st century technology				
Action: Children's Services to consider the use of 21st century technology to assist with compliance with multi-agency panels for out of county placements (as per Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015)	Agency/ Agencies	How progress and achievement will be measured	Lead Officer	Due Date
Background				
As noted in the Code of Practice relating to Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being Act (para 194) http://gov.wales/docs/phhs/publications/160106pt6en.pdf the use of video or tele-conferencing should be considered to support the requirements for Panel to be convened consisting of staff from agencies in both the placing and receiving local authority areas. The use of this technology could also be considered (subject to the agreement of the child or young person) as an approach to support their engagement and participation in decision making	Children's Services, Education, Health, Police	Jan 2019 Update: Discussions have commenced with regard to sourcing an app, which can be used to engage further with young people. Discussions are at an early stage but we are optimistic about the development. In terms of other '21 st century technology', there is more that could be done. Telephone conferencing is not as widespread as it should be. There is a facility at County Hall, but this is not yet available at Hafan Gobaith or at the citywide hubs. Similarly, Skype is only available on work computers to contact other professionals in the council and consideration should be given to making it available to contact young people/other professionals. WhatsApp is popular among young people and it would be positive if this could be installed on work mobiles as this also allows video calling, which many young people do like to use.	Operational Manager, Specialist Services (Cardiff); Principal Officer, (Vale)	By Nov 2016

8: Recommendation: Strengthen approaches to supporting placement stability				
Action: Strengthen approaches to supporting placement stability by ensuring effective actions identified from anti-disruption meetings are widely shared	Agency/ Agencies	How progress and achievement will be measured	Lead Officer	Due Date
Background				

<p>This recommendation relates to an observed pattern of repeated placement breakdowns, which appeared to follow relatively minor incidents. The Panel were of the view that had timely, focused, additional support been available for carers, it may have been possible to maintain the placement, removing the need for an out of county residential placement.</p> <p>For the year 2014/15, across Wales, the % of Looked After Children experiencing more than 2 moves in the year was 20%, and more than 3 moves 9%. The figures for the Vale were 16% and 7% respectively, and for Cardiff 24% and 11% respectively. Whilst all of these moves would not have been due to placement breakdown, clearly placement stability is a desired outcome where possible</p>	<p>Children's Services, Education, Health, Police</p>	<p>Progress report from Children's Services noting successful approaches to supporting placements where placement breakdown has been identified as a risk</p> <p>Jan 2019 Update: The relevant section that outlines the responsibility is as follows: <i>5.15 (page 13) When a Child Returns Parents, police, social worker and anyone else informed that the child was missing should be informed of their return. On finding a child, it is important to clarify any immediate safety and / or welfare needs and take all reasonable steps to address these. It is important to give the child the opportunity to talk about their experiences as well as to ascertain why they ran away. This interview/de-brief should take place as soon as possible but at least within 3 working days. It should be determined and agreed as to who is the most appropriate person to talk to the child. This could be a police officer or social worker but where local agreement exists, a suitable independent person should be utilised.</i></p> <p>The link to this protocol is included on our council CIS system.</p>	<p>Operational Manager, Specialist Services (Cardiff); Principal Officer, (Vale)</p>	<p>By Nov 2016</p>
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9: Recommendation: Review of the All Wales Protocol for Missing Children				
Action: RSCB to request review of the All Wales Protocol for Missing Children	Agency/ Agencies	How progress and achievement will be measured	Lead Officer	Due Date
Background				
The RSCB to write to the All Wales Child Protection Procedures Review Group to request a review and potential re-draft, especially relating to the issue that the All Wales Protocol for Missing Children is not prescriptive around whose responsibility it is to ensure that a missing child is interviewed and/ or offered an independent interview following his/her return unlike the procedures in England. This can lead to confusion especially with the cross border issues with missing children.	RSCB	<p>Response from AWCPPRG</p> <p>Jan 2019 update: 5 All Wales Draft Practice Guides have been shared nationally by Welsh Government. These guides are due to be approved imminently, and it has been agreed that there will be clear links between these guides and the new revised All Wales Protection Procedures for Children and Adults which are due to be in place by September 2019. The guides are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding children missing from home or care. • Safeguarding children from child criminal exploitation (CCE). • Safeguarding children where there are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour. • Safeguarding children who are home educated. • Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked. 	RSCB Chair, RSCB Business Manager	By June 2016

The Independent Reviewing Officers Monitoring Report January 2019

Adoption and Children Act 2002 and The Review of Children's Cases (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004

Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance Wales 2004 sets out the requirements of the IRO's and Responsible Authority in more detail. The key outcomes envisaged are:

- Focus on needs of children and ensuring they are addressed.
- Minimising drift.
- Consistency of care planning and decision-making.
- Involvement of appropriate persons in the process. The Reviewing Officers Guidance 2004 clearly requires an IRO to chair reviews of children who are:
 - In an adoptive placement prior to an adoption order being granted;
 - Looked after subject to a statutory order or accommodated with the agreement of parents.
- Young people in Young Offender Institutions subject to a Care Order or on remand as required under Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offender's Act 2012 (LASPO 2012)

Frequency of reports

The Independent Reviewing Service provides a report to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee twice a year and will also provide twice yearly reports to the LSCB.

The Reviewing Service

The last 12 months has been a very busy period for Children's Services and the Safeguarding and Reviewing Service. The service comprises 16.5 IROs, however one of these posts is funded with money from the IFST service, specifically to review cases within this service. This means that in practice there are 15.5 posts. At the present time however 1 person is on maternity leave and 3 people have been on long term sick leave for at least 3 months. There are 2 agency workers covering, which means that there are effectively 13.5 IRO's in post. This compares with 14 IRO's in post at the same time last year.

The establishment has grown to include 2 additional Independent Reviewing Officers as the number of Looked After Children has continued to expand (see below). There have been 4 recent recruits, which include the new posts as well as 2 members of staff that retired. As such the team is a mixture of experienced staff who have been in post for a number of years and some new recruits who have come from casework teams in other parts of Children's Services. An induction program was in place to support the new recruits, with some buddying. They have settled in really well and have brought some positive and new ideas forward in engaging families.

Since the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 combined with additional pressures placed on the department, the current number of IRO posts are now insufficient to respond to the increasing demands. The current caseload for an IRO in Cardiff is, on average, 92 children. This is a mixture of mostly Looked After Children (882) as well as a lower amount on the child Protection Register (currently 199). National guidance advocates that the caseload should be within the remit of 65-75 in number. As a result, there is an intention to recruit an additional member of staff on a short term basis to cover the maternity and sickness leave posts, which should relieve some pressure on caseloads and reduce this number down to approximately 86 children per IRO.

All IRO and Child Protection (CP) chairs in the service are able to undertake dual functions chairing Looked After Children reviews and/or Child Protection Conferences. This has improved the effectiveness of the IRO function and quality assuring the support available for Looked After Children.

There are currently 2 Service Managers in place in the Safeguarding and Review team, both reporting to the Safeguarding Operational Manager. The second Service Manager is currently responsible for the Adult Safeguarding Team and the Education Safeguarding Officers Service. Under the management of the Operational Manager, the Service Manager posts work on a strategic level to guide and advice on the safeguarding agenda across the council and the city. There has, however, been a large rise in the number of allegations of concern relating to professionals involved with children and adults at risk and wider corporate safeguarding expectations which also fall under the remit of the Safeguarding and Review service. In order to respond to this, there has been agreement to the funding of a third Service Manager post to be created in January 2019.

Immediate line management responsibility for the IROs is undertaken by the Safeguarding and Reviewing Service Manager. Within last year's CPAC report it was noted that "*The current Service Manager post is vacant following the departure of the previous manager*". This post was successfully filled early last year, but this manager is now on secondment. As such there has been a new secondee who has been in post since the 12th November 2018. This has meant that the IRO's have had several changes of manager in the last couple of years. The management arrangements will be reviewed in April 2018.

Regional Safeguarding Children Board

The IRO and Conference Service is expected to report to the Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Children Board on a regular basis to ensure that any issues within the service which may impact negatively on children and their families are addressed regionally. The Board is a forum responsible for the following:

- Multi-agency strategic partnership arrangements in the region
- Has a statutory duty to hold all agencies to account for their safeguarding responsibilities in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Lead, co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding practice in the region

- Challenging relevant agencies in an area so that there are effective measures in place to protect children and adults who are experiencing harm or who may be at risk as the result of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and there is effective inter-agency co-operation in planning and delivering protection services and in sharing information.

As part of the Board's functions, they undertake a scrutiny role in the child protection process and must be informed of any concerns as regards children who are in the child protection or looked after children process. As part of this work, the Board is currently developing a suite of data across the region which will monitor any delay or drift, or any professional dispute resolution necessary in all looked after children cases. The Children's Audit Sub-Group of the Board are also developing audit tools to assess the effectiveness of the IRO service.

Independent Reviewing Role:

The independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service is a statutory function within each Local Authority. Each authority must appoint a person (IRO) in respect of all looked after children known to the authority. The IRO role is key to improving outcomes for children in care, it is a legal requirement and an important process in determining decisions affecting a child's future and, increasingly, IRO's are being called to account for the robustness of these decisions. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 challenges Local Authorities to do things differently and to improve consistency and quality of practice, ensuring that children and young people are seen and heard and play a meaningful part in the decisions that are made about them and in determining their own wellbeing and outcomes.

Recent Practice Standards produced by the Association for Fostering and Adoption (AFA) Cymru and the Welsh Government for reviewing Looked After Children carefully considered the 2014 Act and provides guidance for IRO's and Local Authorities. It summarises a number of issues relating to the role of the IRO that are useful to include here:

- *The IRO's role is to monitor, that is keep an overview of the child's case, not just at formal review meetings, but between review meetings as well.*
- *During the reviewing process the IRO has a duty to look at how the child has been looked after and how the care plan is progressing*
- *As the IRO does not have the power to overrule the Local Authority decision making process, there has to be some way of showing that they are concerned about the progress of a child or young person's case or a decision made in relation to a care and support plan. The local authority should have a dispute resolution process by which IRO's can make senior managers in the local authority aware of their concerns, with a view to resolving them. If that internal process does not work, then the IRO may refer to CAF/CASS Cymru.*

- *The role of the IRO carries with it personal responsibility for carrying out his or her functions. In a case in 2012, **A & S v Lancashire CC [2012] EWHC 1689 (Fam)** it was clarified that the IRO may be held personally responsible for:*
 - a) *Identifying if a child or young person's human rights are being infringed;*
 - b) *Ensuring that the local authority acts upon the recommendations of the LAC Review;*
 - c) *Referring to CAFCASS if the child/young persons' human rights are infringed or significant recommendations of the review are not acted upon.*

Personal responsibility carries with it the possibility of being personally liable for damages (compensation) to be paid the child if the IRO is held to be in breach of his/her statutory duties.

The number of children subject to Care Proceedings has remained very high. In October 2017 there were 117 children and in October 2018 there were 106. The number can fluctuate from month to month, but this remains a significant number of children. Court proceedings impact considerably on the work of the IRO whereby there is a requirement by the judiciary for IROs to take an active role in the proceedings, read and inform themselves of all documentation provided to the Court, and also present a statement on their view and opinion of the plans and support for the child.

The team remains located at County Hall, although the majority of the reviews are conducted within the community, often in the child or young person's placement setting. There are travelling requirements involved in these reviews where some children have been placed in, for example, the Lake District, Shropshire, Liverpool and London. We currently have 303 looked after children placed outside of the authority. This has increased from 249 in the previous year. This means that 34% of our Looked After Children are placed outside of the Cardiff area. Whilst this can be for justifiable reasons, for instance, being placed for adoption or with a family member, it also be related to broader difficulties due to a shortage of placements within Cardiff.

Cardiff Children's Services remains committed to utilising and imbedding the Signs of Safety approach. The Signs of Safety framework is part of the wider change programme within the service that is designed to significantly improve our ability to achieve better outcomes for the children and families we work with. All IROs and Safeguarding officers have completed the relevant Signs of Safety Training. Work is currently being undertaken with Carefirst officers and the Signs of Safety QA Practice Lead Officer to develop a suite of forms and correspondence which embeds the Signs of Safety strengths based approach across all parts of the IRO and Conference Chair Service. It will also develop a simpler and more focused approach to conducting review and conference meetings.

Purpose of reviews

The purpose of the review meeting is to consider the plan for the child, monitor progress and enable decisions to be made. Part 6 of the Social Services & Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014 relates to Looked After Children and the role of the IRO. Under this part of the Act it is a statutory requirement for each looked after child to have an effective Care & Support plan that meets their day to day long term needs and which identifies the outcomes for the child and also demonstrates the multi-agency plans to meet the child's needs. The plan achieves this by setting objectives for work with the child, birth family and caregivers in relation to the child's developmental needs. These needs include health, education, emotional wellbeing and behavioural development, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, and self-care skills.

Since the implementation of the SSWBA 2014 children who are 'voluntarily accommodated' are done so under Section 76 (formally section 20 of the Children Act 1989). This is usually on a short term basis due to a difficulty at home or where the young person is over the age of 16 and under some circumstances presents as homeless. Children who are voluntarily accommodated are reviewed very carefully and the IRO's look to ensure that this is on a short term basis only or if rehabilitation is not possible that the Local Authority seeks legal advice in a timely way to secure a legal order for the child. There are presently 81 children voluntarily accommodated. 56 of these children are over the age of 16 and all but 7 children (under the age of 16) are accommodated on a short term basis (under 3 months) as part of a planned intervention or where the Local Authority is making an application to secure an order. The remaining 7 children are being reviewed very closely to ensure that their care planning is effective.

Frequency of Reviews

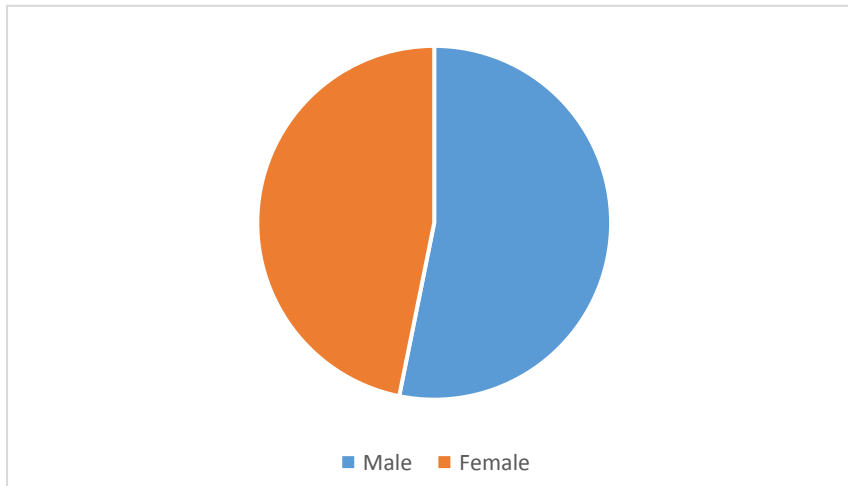
Looked After Reviews are held within 28 days of a child becoming Looked After. The first review then needs to take place within 3 months and the subsequent reviews take place at least every 6 months for the duration of the child remaining looked after. Where there has been a placement disruption or a significant other change (for instance moving from a foster placement to a residential placement) the review will be brought forward. The cycle begins again from the date the child is placed with an adoptive family.

Previously the traditional practice was that the progress of the plan would only be monitored at review meetings. As outlined above with updated legislation, guidance and case law, there is now a duty for the IRO to continually monitor the child's plan and particularly where there are issues of concern or drift. Where there are these issues there is a need to robustly challenge the plan as outlined above. In practice this means that there is significant work that the IRO needs to do on a frequent basis to ensure that they remain in contact with the child's social worker, reviewing the child's records and monitoring the progress of the plan.

In addition to these duties, here in Cardiff the aim has been to split the role with the role of Conference Chairs in Child Protection cases. This ultimately increases the

duties and roles placed upon the individual officers, but allows greater flexibility within the service.

Looked After Children Performance Information



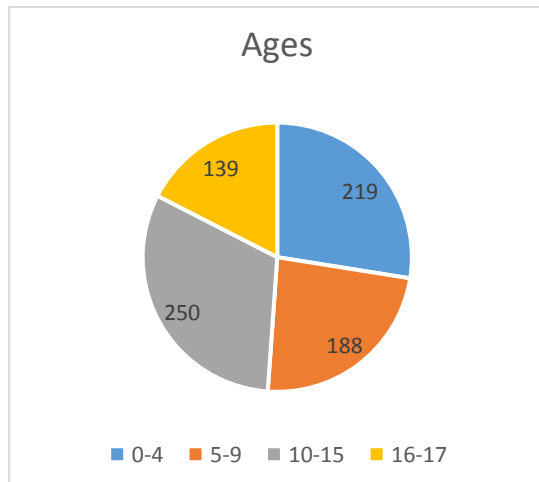
Gender

Male	469	53.17%
Female	413	46.83%
TOTAL LOOKED AFTER	882	

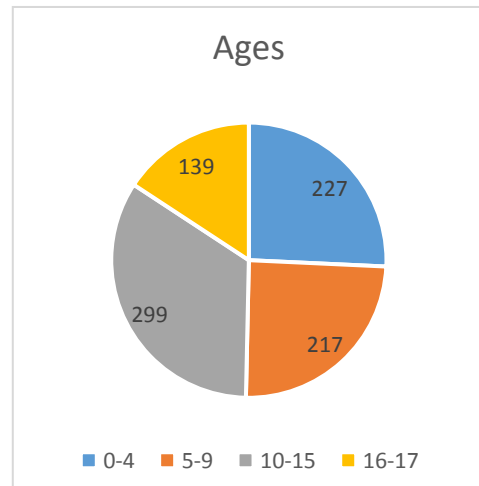
The Looked After Children Population as of the end of October 2018 was 882. This is a significant increase in the number of looked after children since the last reported figures of 796 in October 2017. This is an increase of 86 children or approximately 10%. At present we are unable to provide specific details as to this increase although audit and case management reviews are taking place to look at any trends or issues that may have attributed to this significant increase. What we do know is that it corresponds to a lower level of children on the Child Protection Register, which is currently 199 children compared to 231 children at the same time last year. As detailed in the figures above neither males or females appear to be over represented within the Looked After population.

Over recent weeks Cardiff Council has set up 3 separate panels; a 'Public Law Outline' Panel, 'Resource' Panel and a 'Stepping Up Stepping Down' Panel, to scrutinise more closely the resources available and to ensure that children are becoming Looked After by the Local Authority only when absolutely necessary. In addition, a coordinated effort is being made to refer all children into wider edge of care arrangements such as the Rapid Response and the Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC) as a means of preventing the child from ending up in the formal care process. There are currently 36 children in Cardiff receiving support from the ARC, with the aim being to increase this greatly in future.

Ages of Looked After Children 2017



2018



Age	2017	Percentage		2018	Percentage	
0-4	219	27.5%		227	25.74%	
5-9	188	23.6%		217	24.60%	
10-15	250	31.4%		299	33.90%	
16-17	139	17.5%		139	15.76%	
Total	796			882		

There has been an increase in all the age groups over the last year, apart from the 16-17 age group in comparison to last years' figures.

Start and End Becoming Looked After

2016-17	Starts	Ends	2017-18	Starts	Ends
Nov-16	17	29	Nov-17	27	20
Dec-16	13	20	Dec-17	21	20
Jan-17	37	21	Jan-18	22	15
Feb-17	26	18	Feb-18	38	23
Mar -17	28	12	Mar-18	23	16
Apr-17	18	7	Apr-18	25	15
May-17	39	26	May-18	27	13
Jun-17	32	23	Jun-18	30	22
Jul-17	41	28	Jul-18	15	14

Aug-17	24	20	Aug-18	16	19
Sep-17	22	7	Sep-18	26	15
Oct-17	22	10	Oct-18	25	15
Total	319	221		295	207

Whilst more children became Looked After last year, more children also ceased being looked after during the same period. This has meant that, overall, there were less Looked After Children last year than in the current year. A more detailed analysis of the reasons for this could allow the Local Authority to develop resources for returning certain groups of children home if appropriate to do so.

Number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in Care Nov 17 – Oct 18

We have had 16 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) come into care during the last six months, which is broadly the same as in the same period last year (17 children). The Local Authority has previously worked closely with the Home Office and Welsh Government in offering Care & Support to UASC who were being dispersed to the UK following the closure of the 'Jungle' camp in Calais. The majority of these have since been reunited with their families in various parts of the UK. For those not reunited with family the Local Authority will continue to support them as Looked After Children.

Number of children who have had 3 or more moves

2015/16	64/644	9.90%
2016/17	79/725	10.90%
2017/18	77/830	9.28%

As the figures show there has been a small decrease, both in numbers and percentages of children who have experienced three or more placement moves in 2017/18. This is against a context of more children becoming looked after. This figure includes a percentage of children who have moved from out of county placements back into the authority area. The Reviewing Service continues to support children and social workers to ensure that placements offer stability and are meeting their individual needs. These children will be monitored continuously to ensure that all children have a greater degree of permanency and stability.

Children placed for adoption between 01/11/16 - 31/10/18

Age	Female	Male	Total 2018	Total for 2017
0-4	12	18	30	35
5-9	1	2	3	2
Total	13	20	33	38

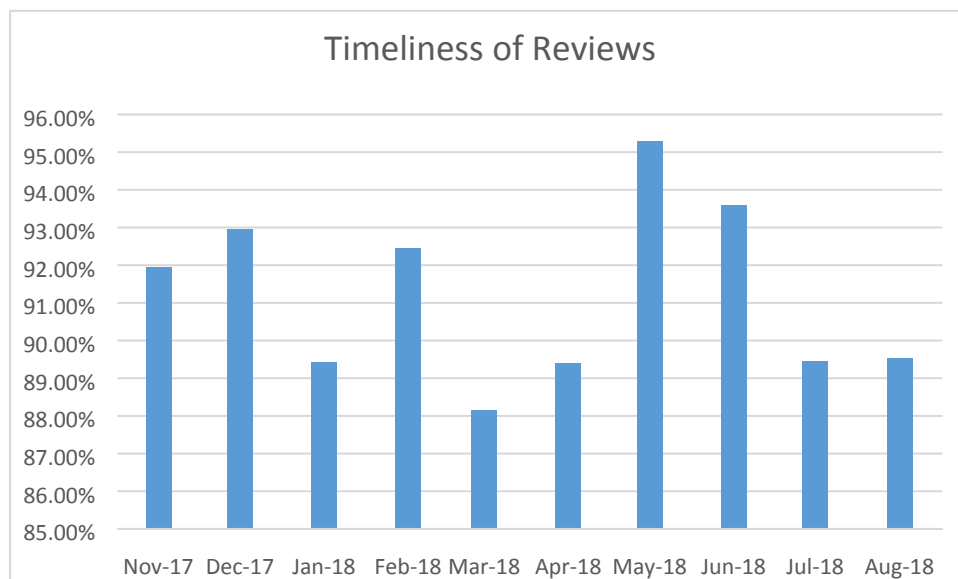
A total of 33 children were placed for adoption between November 2017 and October 2018. This is a slight decrease from the previous year and could be attributable to the general trend in a reduction of the number of adopters available.

There remains disparity between the numbers of children placed for adoption within the 5-9 age range, this emphasizes the need to develop best practice to increase the chances of older children being considered and eventually adopted.

Timelines of Looked After Children Reviews

Timeliness of LAC Reviews

Month	Late	On Time	Total	%
Nov-17	17	194	211	91.94%
Dec-17	11	145	156	92.95%
Jan-18	25	211	236	89.41%
Feb-18	8	98	106	92.45%
Mar-18	27	201	228	88.16%
Apr-18	23	194	217	89.40%
May-18	10	202	212	95.28%
Jun-18	13	190	203	93.60%
Jul-18	21	178	199	89.45%
Aug-18	18	154	172	89.53%



A comparison with other Local Authorities of the timeliness of reviews completed is no longer possible as there is no longer an expectation for local authorities to report on this as a Performance Indicator to the Welsh Government. The target for Looked After Reviews taking place within timescale was however 95.9%. When looking at factors impacting on timeliness it was identified that issues relating to sickness; availability of workers and late notification of the start dates of children being looked after impacted on the authority achieving 100% compliance with this timescale. It must, however, be stressed that given the increase in the number of looked after children within Cardiff over the year, and as discussed previously, the need for additional resource, that the ability of the IRO service to continue to maintain such a high level of timeliness highlights the team's commitment to ensure that we remain within statutory timescales.

The Service Manager for the Reviewing service is informed by the performance team on a weekly basis of all children that become looked after. This provides consistency and timeliness of allocation to an IRO, which in turn has resulted in less reviews being held out of timescales. There has also been changes to the internal notification system for the start period of children being looked after which is now incorporated into our Carefirst System. The recent vacancy of the Service Manager post meant that consistent allocation proved difficult in maintaining timely reviews.

Timeliness of Looked After children reviews is essential to ensure no child or young person has their welfare compromised due to the delay or cancellation of a review. The system in place ensures operational managers must approve a review being cancelled or postponed. Where reviews do not take place within timescale, they take place within the month and the IRO will continually monitor the child by remaining in touch with the social worker, child (where appropriate) and other professionals.

The IRO team and the adoption team have worked closely together to improve adoption reviews. Timescales remain the same, but in many cases these placements are usually out of county arrangements, and this has an impact on capacity for IRO's and can affect caseloads. IRO's ensure they remain the chair for children until adoption is fully completed.

Placement with Parents (as at 31/11/18)

There are currently 130 children subject to a Care Order and living with their parents under Placement with Parent (PWP) Regulations. All of these children must be reviewed by an IRO in the same way as any other Looked After Child. There has been a rise of 33 (34%) PWP cases compared to 97 in the previous year.

Age of Child	Number of PWP	Percentage
0 – 4	52	40%
5 – 9	43	33%
10 – 15	29	22%
16 – 17	7	5%

As can be seen in the table above, the number of children placed with parents is highest for younger children and gets lower the older the child. Cardiff is in a unique

position with a higher than national average number of children subject to Placement with Parent Regulations. Often these arrangements are ordered by the Court and no other Local Authority appears to experience the same amount of PWP's. There is a significant amount of additional work in reviewing children placed at home with their parents, as by virtue of the Court Order, there are often considerable support needs. There is also an expectation that the Independent Reviewing Officer should review these children more closely. As outlined elsewhere in this report, the new Resource Panel will also be reviewing these children periodically to ensure that there remains a need for a Care Order to be in place.

Out of Area Placements

Placement Type	Total for 2018	Total for 2017
Children's home outside LA boundary	49	45
Foster placement with relative / friend outside LA	28	7
Placed with foster carer provided by LA outside LA	15	8
Placed with parents / person with parental resp.	15	14
Placement with agency foster carer outside LA	188	140
Residential School	4	1
Secure unit outside LA boundary (within Wales)	3	2
Youth Offending Institution or Prison	1	3
Grand Total	303	222

The above details the number and breakdown of children currently in out of area placements. As detailed above, there is a significant number of children with agency carers outside of the Local Authority. Work continues to look at the appropriateness of all placements outside of area and an Out of Area Placements Panel takes place on a monthly basis to consider all requests for out of area placements. This is represented by Childrens Services senior management and representatives from Education and Cardiff & Vale Health Board.

IRO Resolution of Problems and Auditing

The Independent Reviewing Officer has an important role in monitoring individual cases and auditing children's plans. A key feature of the IRO role is that they should provide an independent perspective uninfluenced by managerial or resource pressures of the local authority. If an IRO believes that the practice or policy of the Local Authority is detrimental to the child's welfare, they have a duty to assertively challenge the Local Authority. They can highlight both positive and negative issues that affect children, ensuring that children's views are heard. They should be able to evidence how their role has made a positive difference to the child and helped to improve life chances of children they are involved with. This provides appropriate challenge to social work practice and care plans for looked after children.

An IRO can raise any issues of practice with the social worker and team manager. If the issues are not addressed within an acceptable timescale the matter is escalated to the Operational Manager in the relevant service area. The IRO service provides

robust challenge to social work teams regarding cases that have gone into drift or where the quality of care planning is not good enough.

The Local Authority has an active Dispute Resolution Protocol (DRP) in place. This enables issues to be addressed via a formalised document that is retained and responded to within the Carefirst system. These comments on good practice and concerns are looked at and used to evaluate practice, policies and procedures. Following a Looked After review the IRO completes documentation that outlines whether a child's care plan is effective in meeting their needs. This information is then reported and collated centrally. Where there are general low level issues of concern, this gets reported and the social worker/team manager are asked to respond and address these issues. Where there are more serious issues, the Protocol is raised as described above.

Occasionally, this challenge has met with some resistance from some social workers or managers. Where matters have not been resolved satisfactorily they will then be escalated to the Assistant Director for consideration and resolution. In an effort to raise awareness and a better understanding of the IRO role and duties, the IRO service will be attending social work team meetings to discuss the role of the IRO and develop better working relationships.

There have been 13 IRO DRPs that have been raised over the last 12 months, with 4 escalated to an Operational Manager. These have resulted in agreements to progress the cases discussed effectively. In the same period 120 reports were raised reporting good practice. Whilst it could be considered positive that the number of DRPs reporting concerns is very low, this could be considered disproportional considering the size of the Looked After population in Cardiff. As such refresher training for the IRO's is being planned looking at the Dispute Resolution Protocol and when it should be utilised. Further training will also be offered by the Safeguarding and Reviewing Service with case management teams to discuss themes and developments from our experience of reviewing children's plans.

It is a statutory requirement for IRO views to be included within all care plans submitted to Court. Whilst this practice has not been widely adopted across Wales, Cardiff has embedded this into operational practice, with the IRO being provided all care plans and relevant assessments concerning a child prior to being the documentation being filed to the court and their views being recorded in all court care plans.

Pathway Plans

IRO's also chair pathway plan reviews for Young People from age 16 to 17 years who had previously been Looked After. Reviews now also take place regularly for Young Adults 18+ years in response to "When I'm Ready" for Young Adults who want to remain in their foster placement or continue in full time education or training. Many young people do not wish to have a review when they are over the age of 18. Where this is the case the IRO must satisfy themselves that the young person has made an informed choice and offers the young person advice about how to get in touch with the IRO in the future if they wish to change their mind.

Consultation with children and young people

The IRO ensures during the reviewing process that wishes and feelings of the child/young person are sought and they are encouraged to participate in their review. Parents and foster carers are able to contribute to the review process, and also ensure that younger children also have an opportunity to discuss their feelings about the reviewing process and their experiences in foster care.

Within the recent Practice Standards and Good Practice Guide developed by the Association for Fostering and Adoption (AFA) Cymru and the Welsh Government for reviewing Looked After Children, it was remarked that

“In Cardiff IRO’s always end the review with a celebration of what has gone well and what has been achieved, writing these down so that the child or YP can take them away from the meeting with them”.

The Independent Reviewing and Safeguarding Service are currently analysing the way they engage children and young people in the reviewing process. There are a number of good practice examples where the IRO has supported the young person to chair their own reviews. IRO’s also visit children and young people in between reviews to ensure they are happy in the placement, they have the opportunity to share their views independently, and to consider if there are any issues of concern. The service is keen to strengthen children’s participation further in reviews.

The consultation forms in Cardiff are outdated, however work has recently been concluded by the IRO team to update these forms in a Signs of Safety format, which are due to be considered and discussed at the next Signs of Safety Steering group. The IROs have liaised with other Local Authorities and gathered examples of good practice in this area to contribute to effective communication and engagement with Looked After Children. Some examples provided have used apps, phones and other devices which has proved very successful in improving engagement and communication. Early discussions have been held in respect of developing or appropriating an app to engage young people.

In last year’s IRO report, it was recommended that Service Manager for the Reviewing Service will work with the Service Quality Assurance Officer post, which was vacant at the time, to undertake quality assurance visits to young people. This would aim to inform other which areas we can further develop good practice in engaging children and young people in the reviewing process. Recruitment of the QA post has now been completed and this work will now commence in earnest.

Next Steps:

- Initiate recruitment for a temporary IRO position.
- Work with Human Resources to address the long term sickness issues.
- Embed Signs of Safety across all areas of work
- Contribute to overall Safeguarding Action Plan and identify key areas for development
- Undertake training with IRO’s around Protocols
- Prioritise the participation and engagement of children & young people within their Looked After Reviews

- Explore use of software/apps to replace outdated modes of communication with young people and their families
- Modernising and streamlining Business Support to assist with overdue reports.
- Review the children subject of care proceedings and PWP within Children's Services Panels being set up, to allocate further resources to minimise drift

**CYNGOR CAERDYDD
CARDIFF COUNCIL**

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 December 2018

**VALE, VALLEYS & CARDIFF REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE – ANNUAL
REPORT 2017-2018**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a copy of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (VVC) Regional Adoption Collaborative's Annual Report 2017/18 (copy attached at **Appendix A and A1**). The report sets out the key information about the Regional services together with monthly and quarterly performance information for the period 2017 – 2018.

Background

2. As a key part of the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014, the National Adoption Service for Wales has been created to bring together existing local government services into a three tier system, with partnership arrangements for services provided in other sectors, to co-ordinate and deliver adoption services in a different way.

These tiers are:

- local authority level – where all local authorities will continue to identify and meet needs of children for whom adoption is the most appropriate plan;
- regional level – where five local authority collaboratives have been created to deliver agreed adoption functions and develop operational links, as appropriate, with voluntary sector and other services to develop and improve service delivery; and at

- national level – a small team to co-ordinate and drive improvement and consistency, while maintaining strategic and planning links with Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) and the delivery of certain national functions.
3. The Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) brings together the adoption services of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. It is one of the five regional Collaborative's which form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS) .The Vale of Glamorgan Council host the Regional Collaborative.
 4. In March 2015 Welsh Government published the (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015, known as “ The Directions Powers “, which prescribe the regional areas and the governance structure for the service at a national and regional level. The merger of the adoption services within the region in June 2015 was the culmination of much co-ordinated effort and joint working on the part of all partners in progressing the plan to implement the service.
 5. The Annual report brings together into one document a review and analysis of the activities of the collaborative, together with a number of performance measures which monitor performance in relation to the key stages in the adoption process for children with particular emphasis upon the overall timeliness off the process. The report also provides the annual review of the service as required by Regulation 22 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007 and section 15 (c) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Direction 2015.
 6. The report, copy attached at **Appendix A** focusses on the following areas of the regions work:
 - a. Service Development and Governance
 - b. Service Functions

- c. Family Finding
 - d. Recruitment & Assessment of Adopters
 - e. Adoption support
 - f. Adoption Panel
 - g. Complaints and Compliments
 - h. Conclusion and 2018-19 priorities
7. Also attached at **Appendix A1** to the Annual Report is a copy of the Region's performance data for each Local Authority in the Collaborative together with monthly and quarterly data for the year.
8. The Regional report also acts as the Regions Annual Report to the Director of Operations for the National Adoption Service, the Management Board and Joint Committee.
9. The Committee scrutinised the 2016/17 Regional Adoption Service proposals in October 2017. Members welcomed the 2016/17 Annual Report and agreed to commend it to the Management Board and Joint Committee. In a letter to the Head of Service in the Vale of Glamorgan, the Committee made a number of comments (see **Appendix B** and a full response was provided, copy attached at **Appendix C**).
10. The Collaboration's Annual Report for last year, 2017- 2018, included a number of specific improvements and priorities for implementation during the year 2018-19, these are set out in paragraphs 9.

Scope of the Scrutiny

11. The Report will provide the Members with the opportunity to review the progress made in the management and operation of the Regional Adoption Service. Members may wish to evaluate the following aspects of the reports:
- a. How well has the VVC Regional Service progressed against the targets and performance measures;

- b. The progress that the VVC Region has made in addressing the improvements and priorities highlighted in paragraph 9.
- c. What are the plans for the future for the VVC Region.

Way Forward

12. Angela Harris, Regional Adoption Manager, VVC, will present the report on the implementation and performance of the regional collaborations following which they will all be available to answer questions Members may have. Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Claire Marchant, Director of Social Services and Deborah Driffield, Assistant Director Children's Services will also be available to answer any questions.

Legal Implications

13. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

14. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. These financial implications will need to be considered before any changes are implemented. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members review the information contained in **Appendices A & A1** together with any additional information provided at the meeting and submit any comments, concerns or recommendations about the services to the Cabinet Member for discussion with the Regional Manager.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and legal Services

5 December 2018

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

VALE, VALLEYS AND CARDIFF ADOPTION COLLABORATIVE (VVC)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2017 TO 31 MARCH 2018

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) is the largest of the five regional collaboratives which form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS). It provides a regional adoption service to the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. The service is hosted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

1.2 This is VVC's third annual report and covers the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. The Collaborative is required to review the service it provides by regulation and as part of the reporting requirements set out in the legal agreement underpinning the operation of the Collaborative. This report seeks to combine the various reporting requirements in one report.

Appendix A to the report sets out key performance data by quarter and local authority.

2. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

2.1 There has been no changes to the managerial structure of the service during the period and the service continues to be managed by a Regional Adoption Manager and three service specific managers for Family Finding, Adoption Support, and Recruitment and Assessment. The Family Finding Manager went on maternity leave in January 2018 and the post has been covered by an interim 'acting up' arrangement within the service. The Adoption Support Manager's post has been made a permanent full time position as a result of the Best Value Review.

2.2 There have been some changes to the staff team during the year due to a part time Business Support Officer leaving the service to obtain a full-time position, two part-time Social Workers retiring, one Social Worker, who was employed for 30

hours, moving out of the area and two Social Workers going on maternity leave. The loss of these part-time posts has enabled some reconfiguration of these posts to full time positions. The service has continued to receive a high number of applicants for the vacancies which have arisen and also has had success in filling temporary positions. Some short term agency cover has also been put in place to cover gaps.

2.3 As outlined in the last report and due to the increased demands being placed upon the Collaborative, the Directors of the partner authorities commissioned a Best Value Review of the service in December 2016. The review was undertaken by an Officer from the Vale of Glamorgan Business Improvement Team and Finance Officer from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The analysis for the review was undertaken between January and September 2017. A draft report was presented to members of the Management Board during the autumn of 2017, prior to the report being agreed by the Directors and Joint Committee in December 2017.

2.4 The review was comprehensive and sought engagement from a range of staff both within VVC and also from our local authority partners. Consultation also took place with key stakeholders, members of the Management Board and representatives from the NAS central team. The review considered a range of aspects from the current service delivery model, the level of demand being placed upon the service, staffing arrangements, the governance of the region and funding.

2.5 The principal recommendations of the review were as follows:

- a) Finalise completion of the digital Adoption Panel process to streamline processes and improve efficiency.
- b) Establish an Operational Group of VVC and local authority managers to progress service improvement and development work within the region.
- c) Increase regional staff resources within Adoption Support by securing the full time permanent appointment of the Adoption Support Manager and also the additional post covering Letterbox and Access to Birth Records.

- d) In order to meet the emerging need to recruit more adopters, the review also recommended the appointment of a Marketing and Recruitment Co-ordinator on a two year fixed term basis and two Social Workers in Recruitment and Assessment, one to be appointed initially and a further one should adopter applications increase.
- e) Formal review of the Legal Agreement to be undertaken to include twice yearly meetings of the Directors and the Management Board, changes to the frequency of Management Board meetings to quarterly and establishment of an Operational Group as part of the overall governance of the region.
- f) Update and consider revision of the existing funding formula for the service and keep it under review.

2.6 An Action Plan has been developed and agreed to take forward the actions arising from the review.

2.7 VVC continued to operate from Ty Pennant, Pontypridd during this time but due to the licence to occupy the premises expiring in September 2018, a trawl of alternative accommodation options was undertaken in the latter part of 2017 which included partner authorities and commercial options. The available commercial options were financially prohibitive and the partner authorities provided a nil return with the exception of the Vale of Glamorgan. It was therefore agreed that the service would relocate to the Dock Office in Barry during August 2018 prior to the cessation of the licence and following completion of some remedial work to the new premises. It was felt that this would also allow for consultation re any HR issues and for any other matters affecting staff to be considered. The service moved to their new base on 10 September 2018.

2.8 The budget for the Collaborative is managed by the Vale of Glamorgan and is monitored closely by the Management Board and Joint Committee. The end of year position reported a slight overspend in the budget for 2017-18 created by some

additional and unexpected costs for cleaning services at Ty Pennant which were received at year end. The Collaborative receives an annual internal audit undertaken by Bridgend and Vale Audit Shared Service. The audit undertaken for 2017-18 found 'substantial assurance' in respect of the management of risks within the service. The Best Value recommendation to review the funding formula has been taken forward by the Finance Technical Group comprised of Finance Officers from the four authorities. It was agreed that funding arrangements would remain unchanged for 2017-18 but further work would be undertaken in 2018-19 to consider options for future funding of the Collaborative.

2.9. The Management Board has continued to meet bi-monthly during this period. Board meetings have continued to be well represented and supported by Heads of Service from the partner authorities and wider membership. The representative from the Voluntary Adoption Agency, St David's has changed to their Director of Operations and the Chair of the Management Board transferred to the Director of Social Services for RCT in July 2017.

2.10 The Management Board has played a key role in monitoring the progress of the Best Value Review to address improvements in service delivery. It has also continued to regularly monitor the overall performance of the region highlighting areas for improvement and potential solutions. To support the Management Board in monitoring the key elements of the performance framework, it has agreed the key performance data it wishes to receive on a regular basis which is attached at Appendix A.

2.11 The performance of the regional service has continued to be monitored via the NAS Performance Framework. The range of measures has increased each year which has required more comprehensive recording mechanisms to be put in place to capture this data. VVC has fully complied with all reporting requirements.

2.12 The Director of Operations for NAS attended the VVC Management Board in May 2018 to present the NAS End of Year Report for 2017-18 in respect of VVC's performance. Some of the headlines from this report are covered later.

2.13 The Joint Committee met in June and December 2017. The Joint Committee is comprised of elected Members from each of the authorities although the individual Members changed in May 2017 following the local elections. The Joint Committee approved the annual accounts for the Collaborative, the annual budget and plan and the Best Value Review.

3. SERVICE FUNCTIONS

3.1 VVC's Annual Work Plan has focused actions around the ongoing priorities set by NAS to improve adoption support and to place children and recruit adopters more effectively. Progress in meeting these priorities and developments to enhance service delivery are outlined under each of the service areas.

4. FAMILY FINDING

4.1 As previously indicated VVC is the largest of the regional collaboratives with the largest children looked after population. This context was acknowledged in the NAS End of Year Report for 2017-18 which states 'one of the implications of the size of VVC is that it represents a correspondingly large proportion of the overall demand across the spectrum of adoption services that local government and partners are required to provide'. In terms of family finding activity this represents a large area of work for the region and one that has increased since VVC's inception. The NAS report indicates that regionally VVC worked with about 15% of the children looked after within the region during this period.

4.2 The number of children referred for adoption totalled **244** which has fallen slightly on the previous year, although this represents the highest in Wales. **86** children were placed for adoption during the year, a 6% increase on the previous year. A new measure introduced in 2017-18 requires regions to report on the location of placements. During the reporting period, **51** children out of the 86 were placed within the region. **23%** of the placements made were for children in sibling groups which represents an increasing trend.

4.3 At the end of the year there were **138** children who had a 'should be placed' for adoption decision but had not been placed for adoption which is significant

increase on previous returns. **117** of these children were subject of a Placement Order. This figure has been used to project the number of adoptive placements required by the region to meet its' needs. However out of this total, 16 children were on hold pending a change of Care Plan, 34 children had active links, 10 of which were proceeding to matching, and the region was at year end actively recruiting for 67 children.

4.4 The region has recorded **102** Placement Orders being made during the year which also represents a slight decrease although the number of Adoption Orders has increased to **70**.

4.5 The measure in relation to the timeliness of the process from becoming looked after to being placed for adoption indicates that on average children were placed within **13.6 months** which the NAS report indicates is 'close to the benchmark of 13 months or less and one of the better averages amongst the NAS regions'. The NAS report also highlights that the VVC average of **7.7 months** from Placement Order 'is a significant improvement from last year; it is better than the national average although the benchmark is 6 months or less'. Regrettably of all the placements made during the year, **68** children had waited longer than six months to be placed which is higher than the previous year but is indicative of the challenges faced in placing children with complex and additional needs.

4.6 The level of placement breakdown remains relatively low with **3** placement disruptions during the year, one of these was a sibling group where one of the children had complex emotional needs and the other was a little boy with complex needs who had also experienced a previous breakdown.

4.7 The number of birth parents referred to the service for counselling fell during the year to **297** in line with the national picture and slight reduction in children being referred. Overall take up in this area continues to pose significant challenges for the service as only **112** parents took up the service, although this represents one of the higher proportions across Wales.

4.8 The provision of Life Journey Material for children at their second adoption review remains an area of national and regional focus. Further improvement has been noted during the period with **68%** of children placed having life journey work materials in place by the second review. NAS has provided a Welsh Government grant to regions to improve performance in this area. VVC has purchased various resources of direct work materials which have been distributed to childcare teams in the region to assist and improve practice. AFA Cymru has been commissioned by NAS to develop a toolkit and to work with regions to develop improvement plans. AFA Cymru facilitated a day for VVC staff and local authority practitioners in November 2017 and more development days are planned.

4.9 The region utilises several different methods to assist Family Finding. If there are no internal links within the Collaborative external funding agreement is sought. The Welsh Adoption Register generates suggested links based on children's referrals and adopters approved by regional collaboratives and Welsh Voluntary Adoption Agencies. Last year VVC purchased a licence for Link Maker, a national database of children waiting. This has proved to be the most successful avenue for external links although sometimes this has been supplemented by an external mailshot which is sent securely to adoption agencies within the UK. The use of Link Maker has also reduced the need to advertise nationally in family finding publications for children waiting.

4.10 VVC accessed the Welsh Adoption Register Exchange Day in North Wales September 2017 where 29 children were profiled. Unfortunately there were fewer adopters in attendance and many children did not have any potential links from the event. A lot of interest was generated for one of the children but unfortunately none of these links were suitable. One link is still being explored however it has taken some time as therapeutic involvement was required for the transition.

4.11 The service has also used Activity Days organised through Coram BAAF to promote children that were harder to place. Three were accessed across the UK, one child attended in May 2017, another attended in June 2017 and a third child attended in September 2017. Unfortunately no appropriate links progressed from these days. The first Welsh Adoption Activity Day took place in March 2018. This

was extremely successful and resulted in links progressing to a match for four children, a toddler with additional needs, an older child and a sibling group of two.

4.12 As members of Adoption UK, VVC is able to access 'Children Who Wait', a magazine which profiles children seeking adoptive families. A sibling group of two were profiled in September 2017 and two single children were profiled in March – May 2018 for three sequential editions. The sibling group were not linked using this method however we are exploring links for the two single children. As part of the membership VVC is able to access 10 free advertising spaces from April 2018 which will hopefully be utilised productively.

4.13 An application to join 'New Families Social' Adoption Group from April 2018 has been made which will hopefully offer another avenue of profiling children to approved same sex adopters across the UK.

5. RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF ADOPTERS

5.1 The Performance Management Framework records key activity around enquiries, response times to enquiries, applications and timeliness in respect of approval of adopters. The returns in respect of adopter activity have been mixed, with improvements in some areas but not in other areas.

5.2 The region received **242** enquiries from prospective adopters in total for the year 2017/18 which represents an impressive 61% increase on the previous year and is the highest it has been for three years. This is encouraging and provides a sound basis for planning recruitment activity going forward. It remains however difficult to accurately identify the geographical location for all the enquiries received, although the local authority area is now a standard question on the enquiry form linked to the VVC website. Whilst this question has been added, VVC continues to receive a significant number of electronic enquiries where the local authority area is not completed and this information is not specified on the enquiries that come via the NAS website. Of the 242 enquiries received, VVC was only able to identify the local authority area for 152.

5.3 VVC's response rate to enquiries within five working days has returned to 100% following a slight drop in performance during the previous year. It is anticipated that the employment of a Marketing Officer will address any further deficits in this area and enhance our initial response to ensure that enquiries are followed up promptly.

5.4 The region approved **46** adopter households in the year 2017/18 compared with **47** in the previous year. The region was on target to approve over 50 households but there were **5** assessments that did not progress to Panel. This is a high number but the reasons given assist in understanding the complexities which can occur in assessing adopters. In two of the assessments, the couple's birth children were not supporting adoption. In one of the assessments the couple had come to a realisation that adoption was not right for their family situation and in another a realisation that they had come too late to adoption. In the fifth assessment that did not proceed a complex family issue had emerged which the couple found too intrusive to continue. There were two further assessments that were due to be completed in the final quarter of the year but were put on hold. The first couple suffered the loss of a family member and wished to take some time to grieve. The second couple had a complex family issue which arose during the assessment which needed further investigation.

5.5 In relation to VVC's overall performance in relation to the timeliness of assessments the picture is mixed. The timescales from initially enquiry to approval has increased from **12.2 months** to **13.5 months** but the timescale from application to approval has improved with an average of **7.1 months** overall. These figures clearly highlight that the greatest gap is between initial enquiry and application, arguably something that has been out of the control of the Collaborative as this is very much related to individual choice. The region continues to be able to account for the delays in assessment and has continued to supply an explanatory narrative to NAS to accompany the return in respect of these measures.

5.6 As mentioned in the previous report, VVC revamped the initial information provided to adopters, believing that those interested in adoption should be provided with more information on the needs of children at a far earlier stage in the process in order for them to make a more informed decision around whether adoption is the

right choice for them. This continues to be the case, and those attending the information evenings have frequently provided very positive feedback to VVC on how much better informed they have felt. It is clear that the trend noted previously with enquirers taking a longer time to come forward for an initial visit has continued. The recruitment of families for siblings and children with additional needs continues to remain a challenge.

5.7 The shortfall in adopter recruitment and the number of children waiting at year end has become an emerging and very pressing need. VVC was required, along with other regions, to submit a Recruitment Plan and target for approvals at year end. For the reasons indicated above VVC fell short of this target but the need to increase adopter resource was considered closely by the Best Value Review and the additional resources recommended in Recruitment & Assessment was in response to as the emerging need.

5.8 The decision to employ a Marketing and Recruitment Co-ordinator is seen as crucial in being able to track and harness the enquiries to increase the number of enquiries which can be converted into applications. Due to the number of children waiting and the number of Placement Orders projected to be made in the coming year, NAS project that the number of adoptive placements required will be 145. This is likely to pose significant challenges upon the service. The Marketing and Recruitment Officer has recently been appointed.

5.9 As of 31st March 2018 there were 26 assessments being completed by the region with a further 11 assessments generated from the adopter training in March 2018 which were all allocated within the first quarter of 2018/19.

5.10 Five of the adopter assessments undertaken during the year were from foster carers wishing to adopt the child in placement. Of the five that were completed in 2017/18, four of them had the child placed with them for more than one year at the point of their application.

5.11 During the past year the majority of the assessments completed have been allocated within the Recruitment and Assessment function. Agreement to extend hours for a couple of part time staff in the Family Finding Team was sought to complete assessments that could not be allocated and by utilising staff slippage monies. Assessment plans and mid-point reviews have continued to be used to improve practice and timeliness.

5.12 VVC continues to receive high numbers of non-agency adoption referrals, the majority of which are from step-parents wishing to adopt their step-child. It is planned that this area of work will be collated by NAS in the coming year. Again this is an area which poses significant challenges for the service. The need to prioritise the recruitment of adopters for children waiting to be adopted has resulted in a waiting list for allocation. On occasion, applicants have submitted their application to adopt directly into Court which resulted in an urgent assessment being required.

5.13 During the year, there has also been a slight increase in inter-country related enquiries, which have posed some issues for the team due to their complexity. Quite a few of the enquiries received are from couples wishing to adopt a child who is known to them, who resides in a different country. This area has also identified a knowledge gap in the service which we hope to address via training.

5.14 Towards the end of the reporting period, NAS was able to secure some additional funding to assist with recruitment. VVC utilised their grant to provide leaflets to assist with marketing the service and along with two other regions to employ a marketing company, COWSHED to develop a regional Marketing Plan. Further funding has been provided by NAS to provide mentoring by the company to the regions. This plan will therefore be further developed by the Marketing Co-ordinator in conjunction with COWSHED.

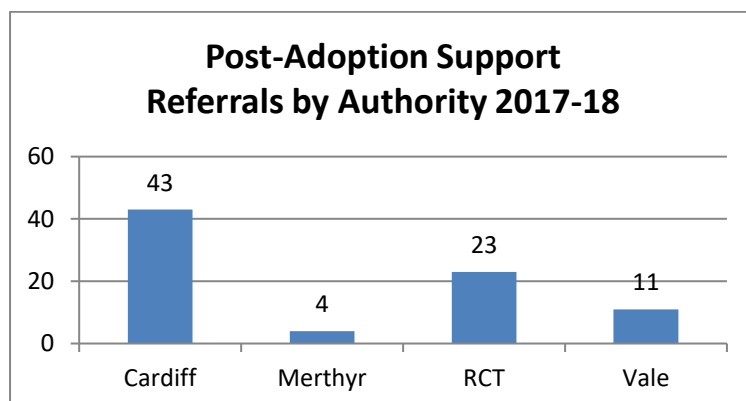
5.15 VVC has recognised that further training is beneficial for adopters to help prepare them for the matching process following approval as adopters. A couple of staff within Recruitment and Assessment have therefore devised a four day course for adopters which now runs every two months. The course provides guidance to help prospective adopters prepare for a visit from a childcare Social Worker to discuss a proposed match providing an overview of the process required to match a

child and explain the legal process of adoption. Information about how introductions are planned is also provided. The second part of the course encourages adopters to think about the grief and loss a child will experience following a placement move. Activities are undertaken to help adopters think about their support network and highlight the importance of seeking help if they experience difficulties post placement. Techniques to promote positive parenting are discussed and materials shared to help adopters think about ways they can introduce themselves to children prior to placement.

5.16 Three training sessions were held between November 2017 and March 2018 and a total of 37 people attended the course during this period. A lot of positive feedback was received from participants including comments such as adopters felt 'better prepared' and found the course 'informative and enjoyable'. A Welcome Booklet for new adopters has also been developed which provides information and guidance pre-matching on a range of issues.

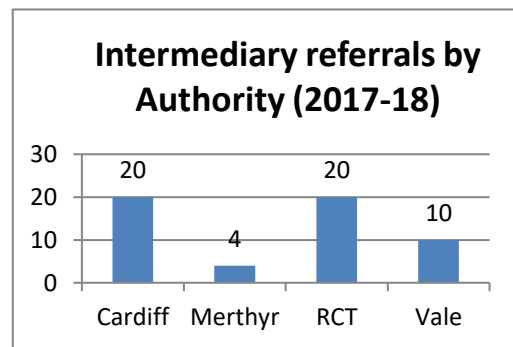
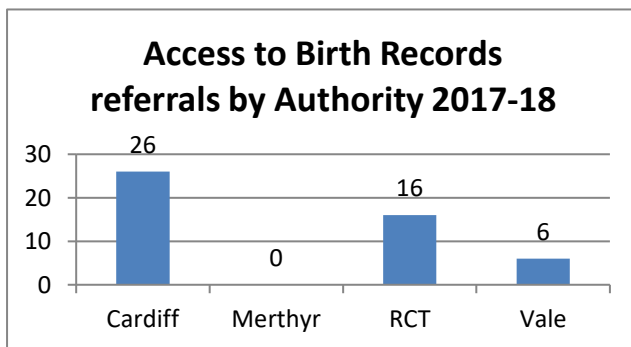
6. ADOPTION SUPPORT

6.1 Demand for adoption support services has remained steady through 2017-18. With **81** requests for adoption support received VVC is showing a consistent referral rate with the previous year's figure (83). This averages around 20 referrals per quarter requiring allocation for assessment. This trend has also continued in Quarter 1 of 2018-19 when 25 referrals were received.



Although referral rates overall remain similar, Cardiff's proportion of referrals rose by 54% from 2016-17 whilst RCT and the Vale of Glamorgan saw a drop of around 35%. Merthyr's referral rate dropped by over 50% however this represents a drop from 9 referrals in 2016-17 to just 4 in 2017-18. Q1 figures for 2018-2019 show referrals for Cardiff, RCT and the Vale of Glamorgan on a par with each other; in fact the Vale of Glamorgan has had 8 referrals in Q1 this year when there were only 11 in the whole of 2017-18.

6.2 In relation to Access to Birth Records cases, VVC has observed a drop of around 28% in referrals with **48** in 2017-18, however in contrast intermediary referrals have increased by 59% to **54** (from 34 last year). Comparing the referral rates when VVC became operational in 2015-16 to the year-end figures for 2017-18, intermediary referrals have increased by 184%. This is largely due to the increase in VVC's capacity to allocate Access to Birth Records cases resulting in an increase in these adopted adults seeking a follow-on intermediary service. VVC remains one of few regions in Wales that has been able to continue to provide this service albeit with a lengthy waiting list.



There has been no marked difference in the referral rates by local authority from the previous year in relation to Access to Birth Records. There is a notable increase in intermediary referrals for RCT from 7 to 20 in 2017-18 (185% increase).

6.3 As at 31st March 2018 there were **812** open letterbox cases, an increase of 6% from 767 on 31 March 2017. This reflects the ongoing gradual increase observed in letterbox contact as new referrals exceed the number of existing arrangements closing when a child reaches 18.

6.4 The permanent staffing to enhance the Adoption Support Team 2016 as a result of the pilot exercise in 2016 and the outcome of the Best Value Review has been of significant benefit in reducing pressures within the team and gaps in service delivery. The Letterbox Co-ordinator role in particular has improved the quality of support being provided to adoptive families and birth parents.

6.5 Other monies secured as part of the 2016 pilot were used to access specialist training, the majority of this being used in 2016-17 although additional training has been accessed for some staff in the Adoption Support Team to complete DDP Level 1 training during the year. Staff within the Adoption Support Team are experienced and committed to service improvement. The team has facilitated adoption support groups for adoptive parents with topics including Sensory Processing Difficulties, Social Media and Contact in the last year. In addition, a monthly toddler groups has been maintained which provides opportunities for early intervention as well as bi-annual fun days which have high attendances.

6.6 Family fun days were held in July and November 2017 which were both well attended and numbers of those attending remain consistently high at around 90-100 children. VVC issued a newsletter in the spring of 2018 which was produced by the Adoption Support Manager. The region also contributed to the Adopter Voice project with Adoption UK which included attendance at one of VVC's support groups to consult with adopters. A report of this consultation has been presented to VVC Management Board.

6.7 The Regional Adoption Manager and Adoption Support Manager have continued to be involved in the IPC project commissioned by NAS to develop a National Framework for Adoption Support, the National Adoption Support sub group meetings to take forward the Framework as well as the focused project on Life Journey Work through 2017-18. The Adoption Support Manager has been involved in securing resources to utilise the grant monies referred to earlier in the report to support improvements in Life Journey work. Further funding is anticipated for 2018-19 and plans for how to make the best use of these resources are being considered.

6.8 The Adoption Support Team has continued to develop an understanding of the demand for targeted and therapeutic services with families needing support across the region and the cost of these to the local authorities. At present the adoption support budget is not held centrally in the region and is retained by the individual local authorities. This continues to pose some challenge in terms of equity of service and timeliness of decision making, but generally local authority partners concur with the assessment undertaken by VVC and packages of support are being put in place as needed. The Adoption Support Manager is currently developing an adoption support improvement plan which places a greater focus on social work input and intervention with families prior to progression to therapeutic support services with a view to avoiding the need for such interventions.

6.9 The Regional Adoption Manager and Adoption Support Manager have, in conjunction with colleagues from Western Bay met with the CAMHS Clinical Lead with a view to developing a consultancy service for Social Workers and a clear referral pathway for adopted children who may require a CAMHS service. A plan to progress these initial discussions is being developed.

7. ADOPTION PANEL

7.1 The Collaborative has continued to operate a joint regional Panel from two sittings, a north sitting covering cases from RCT and Merthyr Tydfil CBC and a south sitting covering cases from Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Where adopter approvals involve no medical issues, there is provision to transfer the case for consideration to the Panel sitting with availability.

7.2 Panel business has remained at a high level during the year with 42 Panel meetings being held, with three scheduled meetings being cancelled due to delays in cases being ready for presentation.

7.3 As outlined in the previous report and highlighted as an improvement action in the Best Value Review, a significant area of development for the Panel has been to move to digitalising the Panel process and business. This work was completed by

the end of March 2018 with the result that Panel business is now conducted via the use of tablets and sending Panel information to Panel members via a secure portal. This has improved security and reduced administrative time and printing costs.

7.4 Maintenance of the central list of Panel members continues to pose challenges in terms of maintaining a sufficient number of independent members and Social Work members. Some new members have been recruited during the year. An induction session for new members was held in June 2017 and a training day for all Panel members was also held in June 2017 facilitated by an independent trainer.

7.5 The other priority set in respect of completing the annual reviews of Panel members remains outstanding but a timetable is being developed to meet this requirement.

8. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

8.1 VVC has received the following complaints during the period:

- Complaint from prospective adopters regarding the process of linking and matching a child and lack of transparency on the part of the local authority Social Worker and staff within the Collaborative in respect of a link they were being considered for.
- Complaint from non-agency adopters regarding the initial advice provided by VVC regarding the process and requirements.
- Complaint from a step-parent regarding the step-parent adoption process, the delay in the Social Worker concluding the report and not responding to queries raised by the applicant.
- Complaint to the Managing Director from an adopted person regarding the service provided in respect of his access to birth records enquiry.
- Complaint from adoptive parents regarding their attendance at Adoption Panel in 2015 following a review of their approval. Complaint received as part of a stage 2 complaint to Cardiff Council concerning the breakdown in introductions to a child.
- Complaint from adoptive parent in respect of the post adoption support received from the allocated Social Worker.

- Complaint from an adoptive parent regarding the delay in securing a post adoption therapeutic support package.
- Complaint from adopters alleging that they had been discriminated against and treated less favourably by VVC staff in terms of their assessment and the subsequent linking process.

8.2 All the complaints have been resolved at stage 1 of the Vale of Glamorgan Complaint Process.

8.3 Two of the complaints have highlighted issues in respect of the linking process. VVC has, as outlined earlier in the report, introduced a fourth day of training to address some of the issues raised. Two of the complaints have highlighted issues in respect of the non-agency adoption process. VVC's website now contains information in respect of this process. Two have highlighted concerns in respect of adoption support which were addressed.

8.4 Regional staff have also received a number of compliments during the year. A record of these is maintained. The compliments include positive feedback from the fun-days, the toddler group, information evening and support provided for letterbox contact and access to birth records enquiries.

9. CONCLUSION AND 2018-19 PRIORITIES

9.1 During the period for this report, a Best Value Review was undertaken, commissioned by the Directors of the four local authorities. This provided a real opportunity to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the service and to look at potential remedies to address some of the presenting difficulties. The findings of the Review validated the earlier work undertaken by VVC detailing capacity and resourcing issues and options to address the shortfalls in the service.

9.2 In respect of regional performance, the increased the number of children being placed for adoption during the period, the number being adopted and the reduced time taken to place a child for adoption from Placement Order are positive improvements. Some improvement has also been noted in the provision of Life Journey materials for children placed and in respect of the take up of birth parent

counselling. These improvements must however be considered against the increase in the number of children waiting for placements and the number waiting over six months to be placed. This set against the decrease in approvals of adopters and delays in timely recruitment of adopters makes recruitment an ongoing and clear priority for the service.

9.3 The service has also been proactive in developing some new initiatives during the year to more effectively support adopters and prepare them for placement. There is also evidence that the increased permanent resource in Adoption Support is having a positive effect in improving performance and reducing pressures on the service. The priorities set for the 2017-18 have been met in part but some are ongoing due to the need to continue to remain focused on our core business.

9.4 The priorities we have set for 2018-19 focus upon completing the actions arising from the Best Value Review which have been endorsed by the Management Board. Particular emphasis for the remainder of the year will focus upon driving up the conversion rate of adopter enquiry to application with the intention of increasing the rate of adopter approvals. Some systems have already been put in place to improve our initial response following the recent appointment of the Marketing and Recruitment Co-ordinator and so it is hoped that these can be developed further once the additional resources in Recruitment and Assessment are in place.

9.10 The other focus of activity and priority for VVC during this current year has been managing the recent relocation of the service to Barry. In order to achieve as smooth a transition as possible and to minimise service disruption, this has required careful planning and preparation by VVC staff and the development of some new systems of working to meet the needs of the whole region. The permanent location will have benefits longer term but the service is still in a settling in period so it is important that our priorities remain delivering our core business and service improvements.

Angela Harris

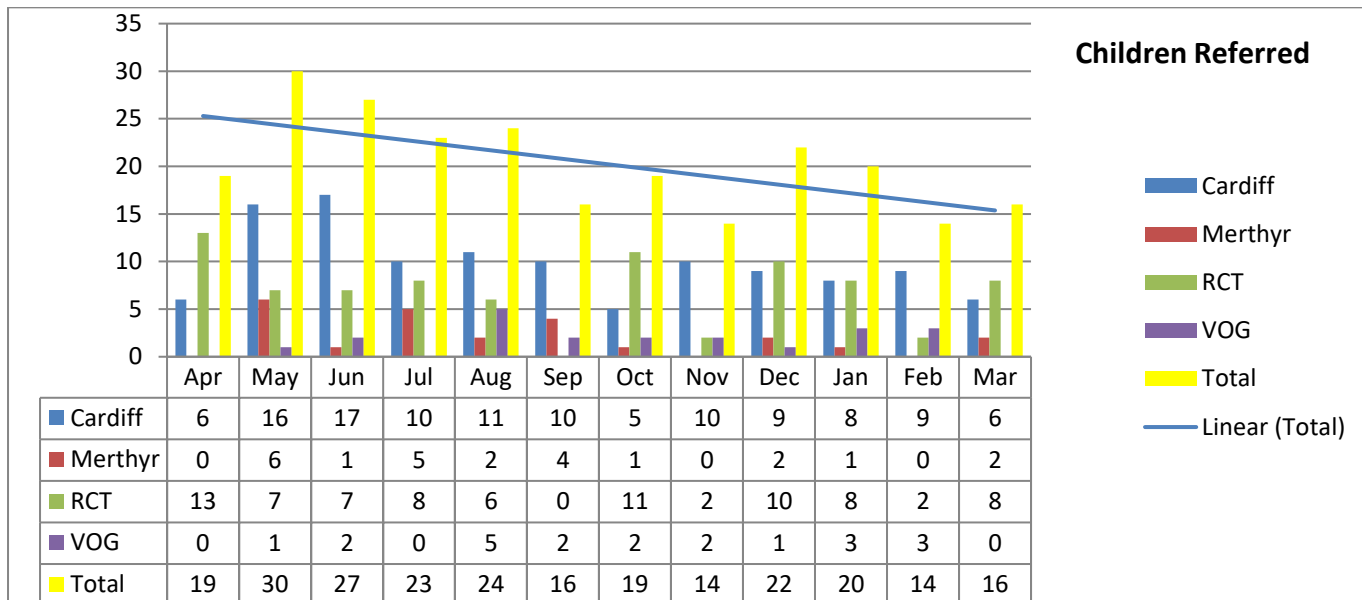
Regional Adoption Manager

September 2018

This report provides an overview of VVC performance against key indicators in respect children and adopters. The information is provided by local authorities. Comparative data is presented for 2016-17.

CHILDREN

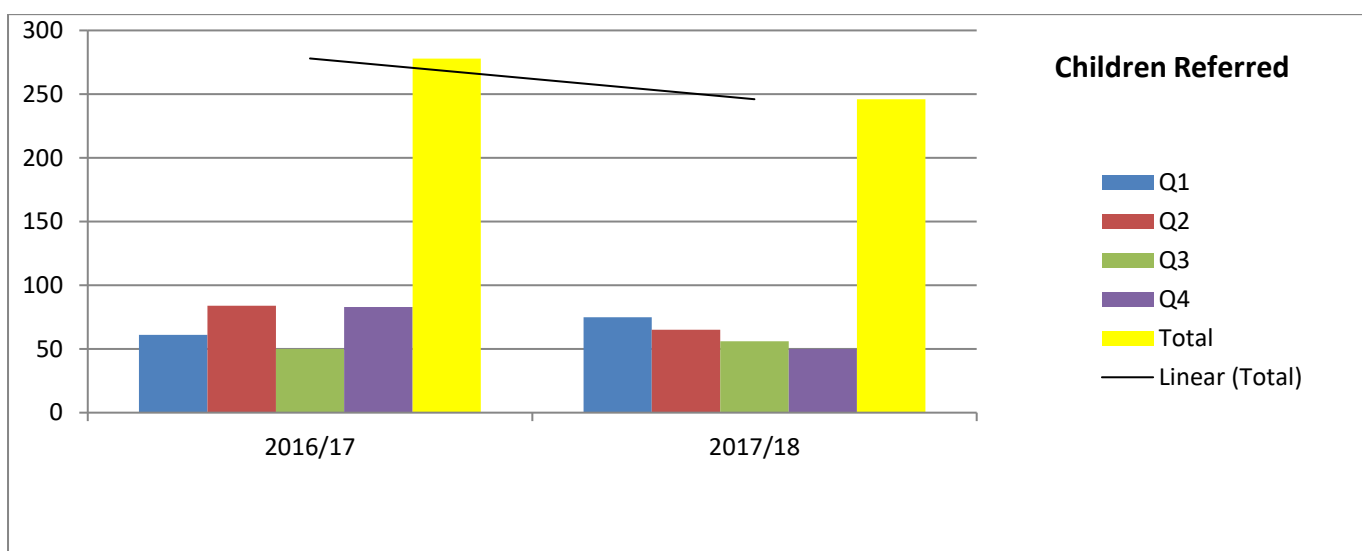
Number of Children Referrals made to VVC since April 2017 – of the 245 referrals received for 2017/18 – 57 have been withdrawn (23%)



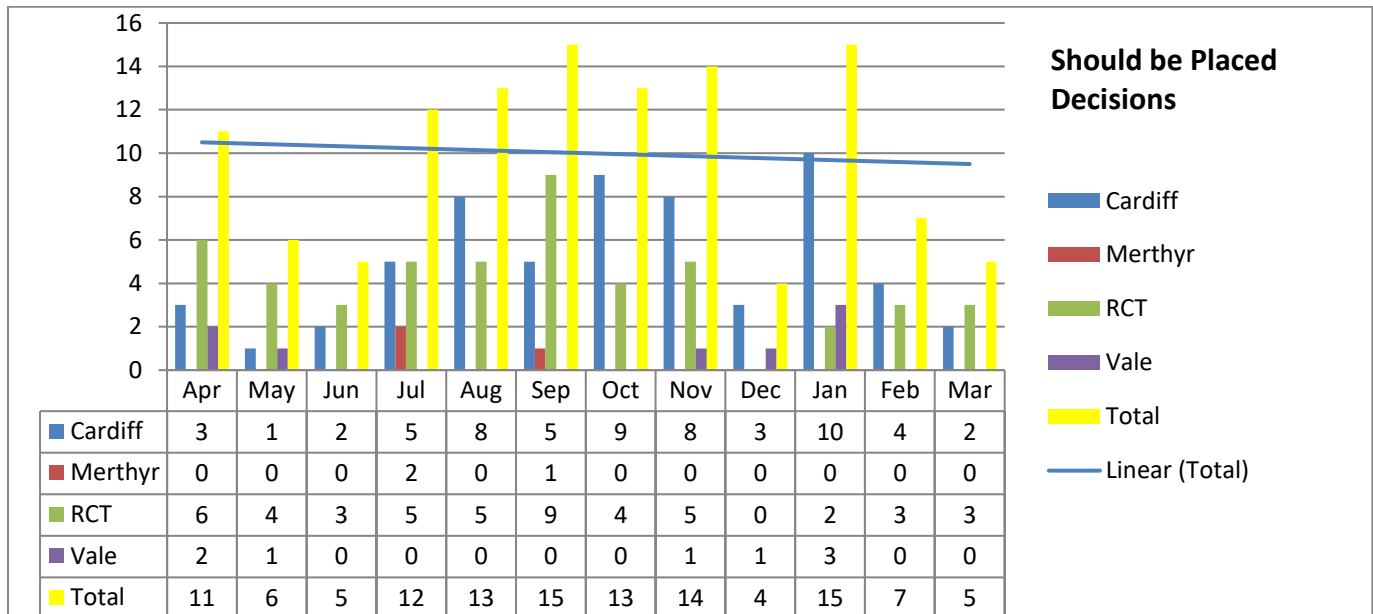
2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
Total	117	24	82	21	244

The number of children referred for adoption has fallen slightly although this figure represents the highest in Wales.

Number of Children Referrals made to VVC – Comparative Data



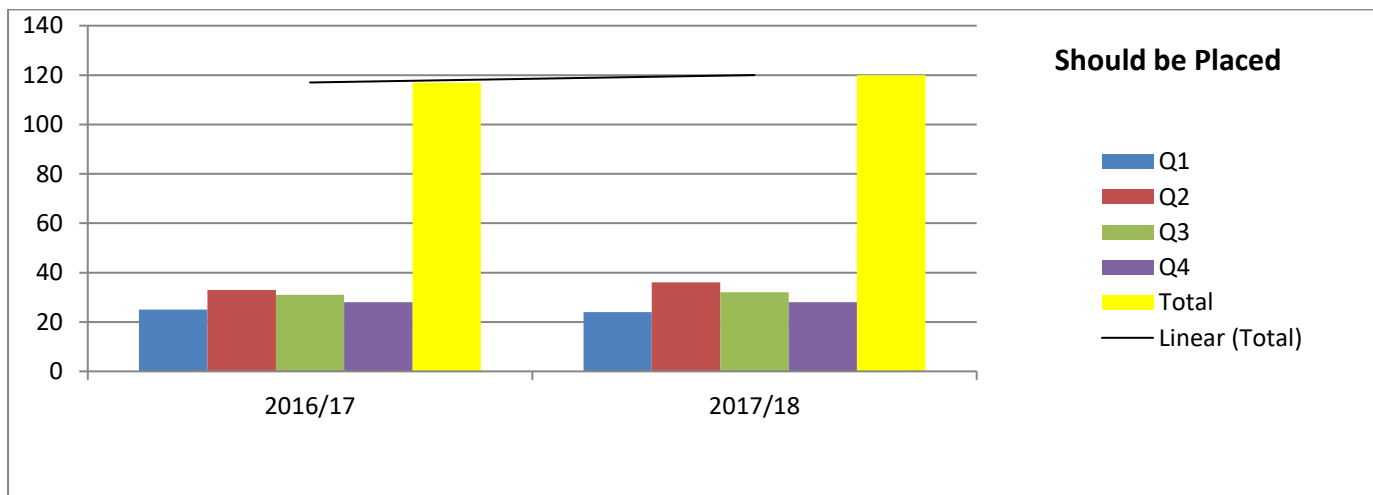
Number of Should Be Placed Decisions made since April 2017



2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	Vale	Total
Total	60	3	49	8	120

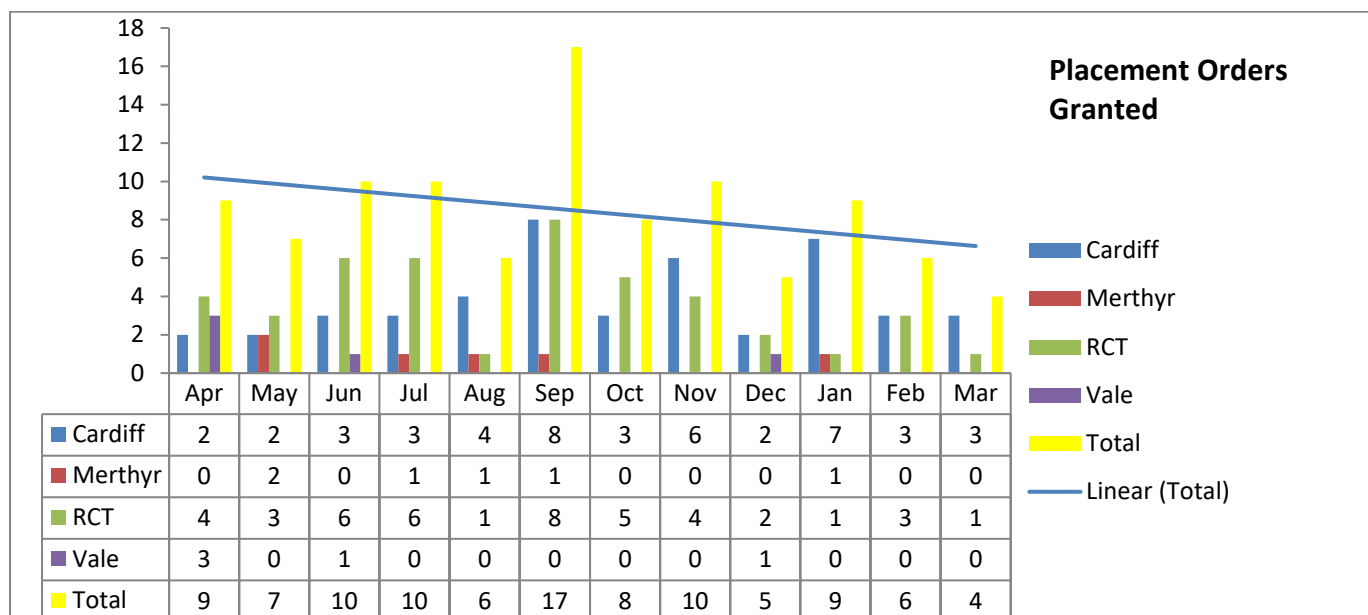
The number of children with a should be placed for adoption decision has slightly increased during the period.

Number of Should Be Placed Decisions made – Comparative Data



Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2016/17	25	33	31	28	117
2017/18	24	36	32	28	120
Total	49	69	63	56	237

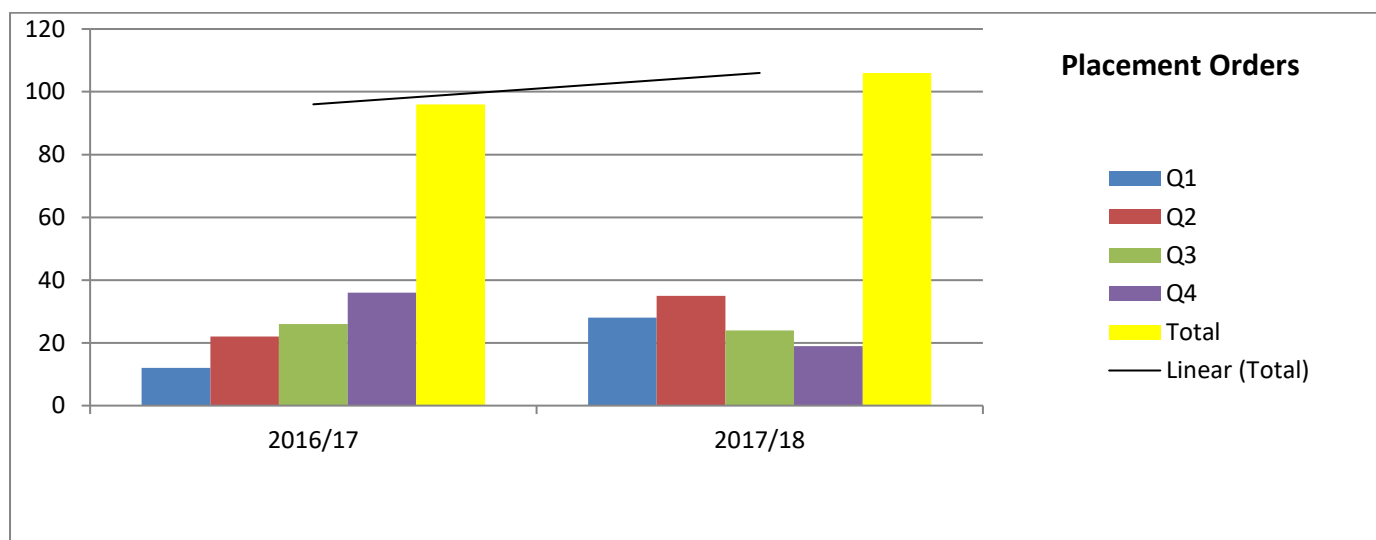
APPENDIX A VVC ANNUAL REPORT 17-18
Number of Placement Orders made since April 2017



2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
Total	47	6	44	5	102

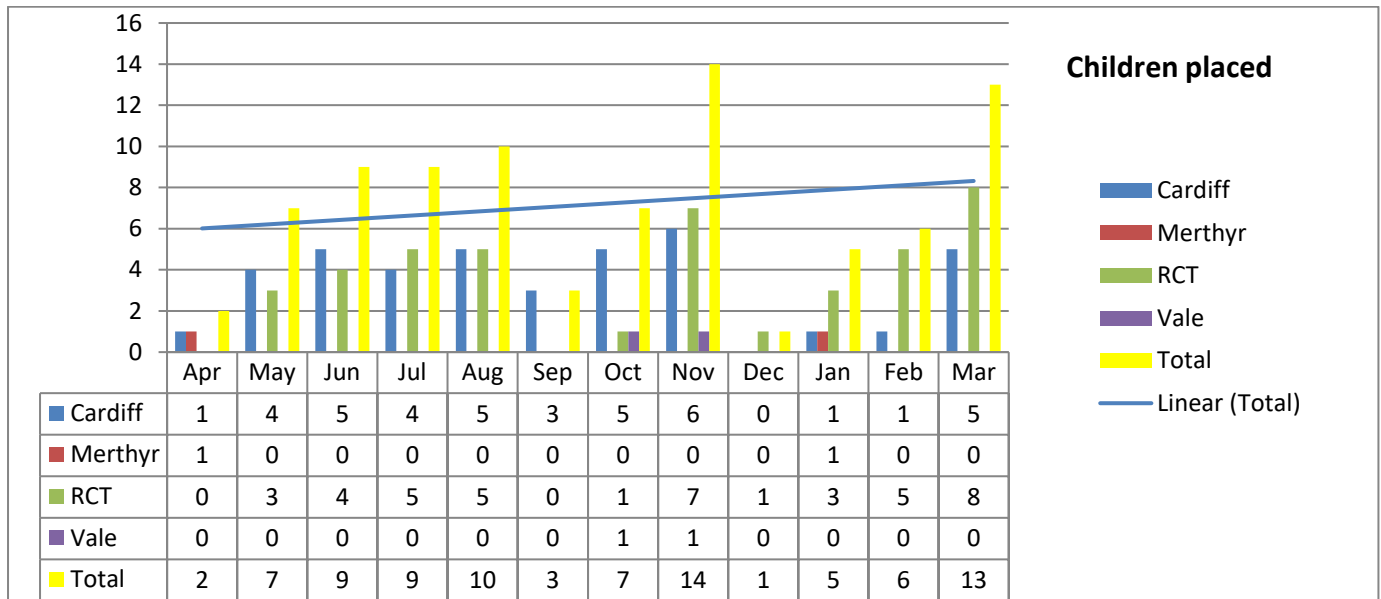
The region has also seen an increase in the number of children made subject of a Placement Order which is clearly affecting the number of children waiting.

Number of Placement Orders – Comparative Data



Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2016/17	18	33	26	36	113
2017/18	26	33	23	19	102
Total	40	57	50	55	215

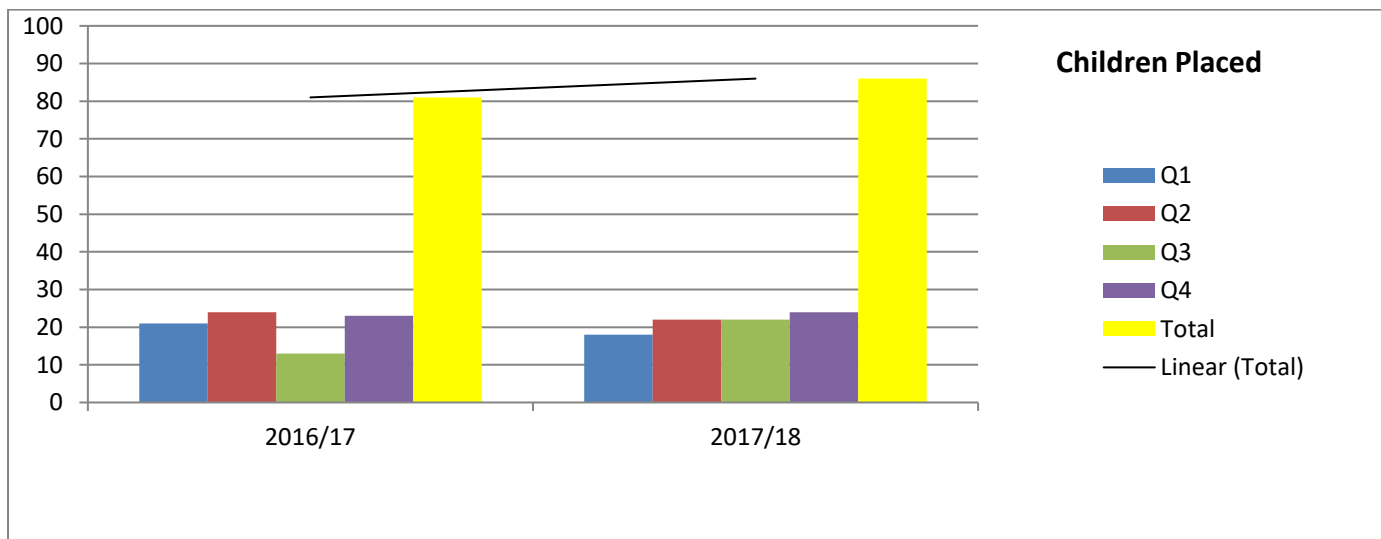
Number of children Placed for Adoption since April 2017



2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
Total	40	2	42	2	86

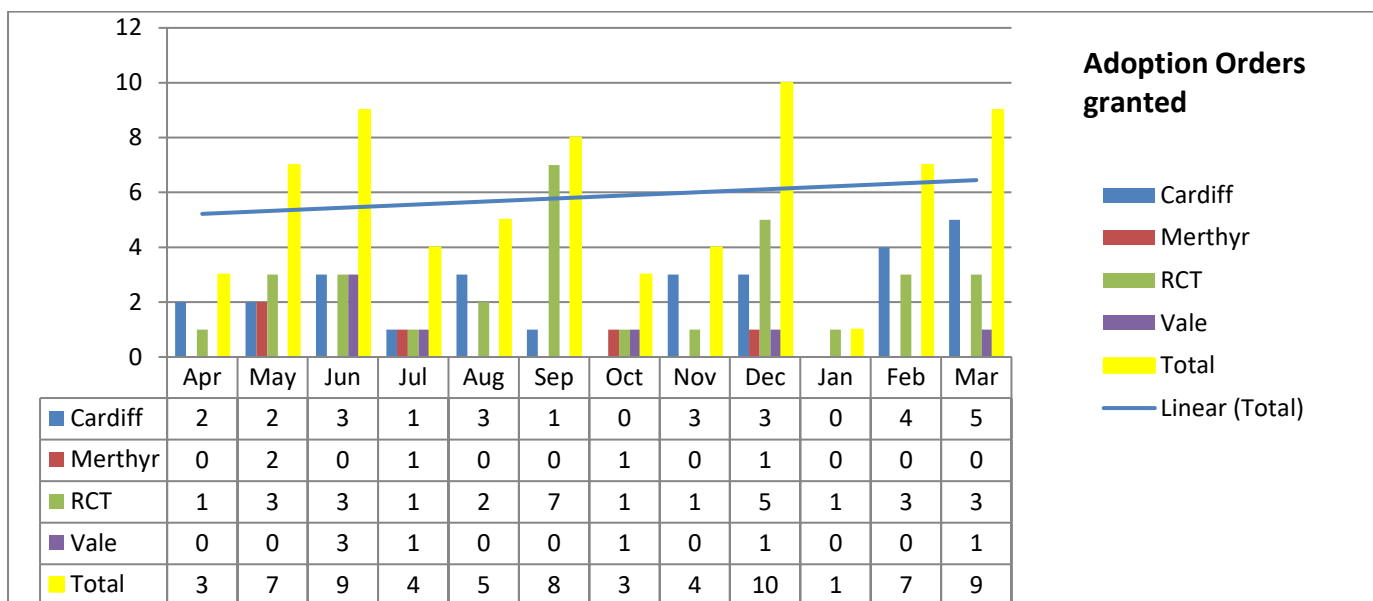
The number of children placed for adoption during the year has increased on the previous year which again is the highest in Wales.

Number of children Placed for Adoption – Comparative Data



Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2016/17	21	24	13	23	81
2017/18	18	22	22	24	86
Total	39	46	35	47	167

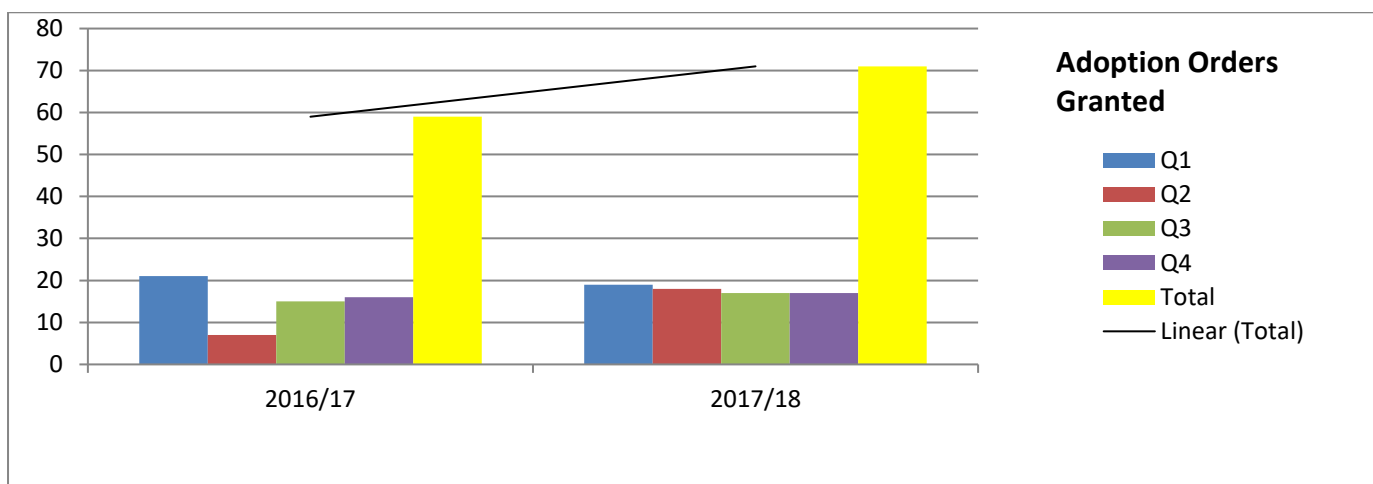
Number of Adoption Orders Granted since April 2017



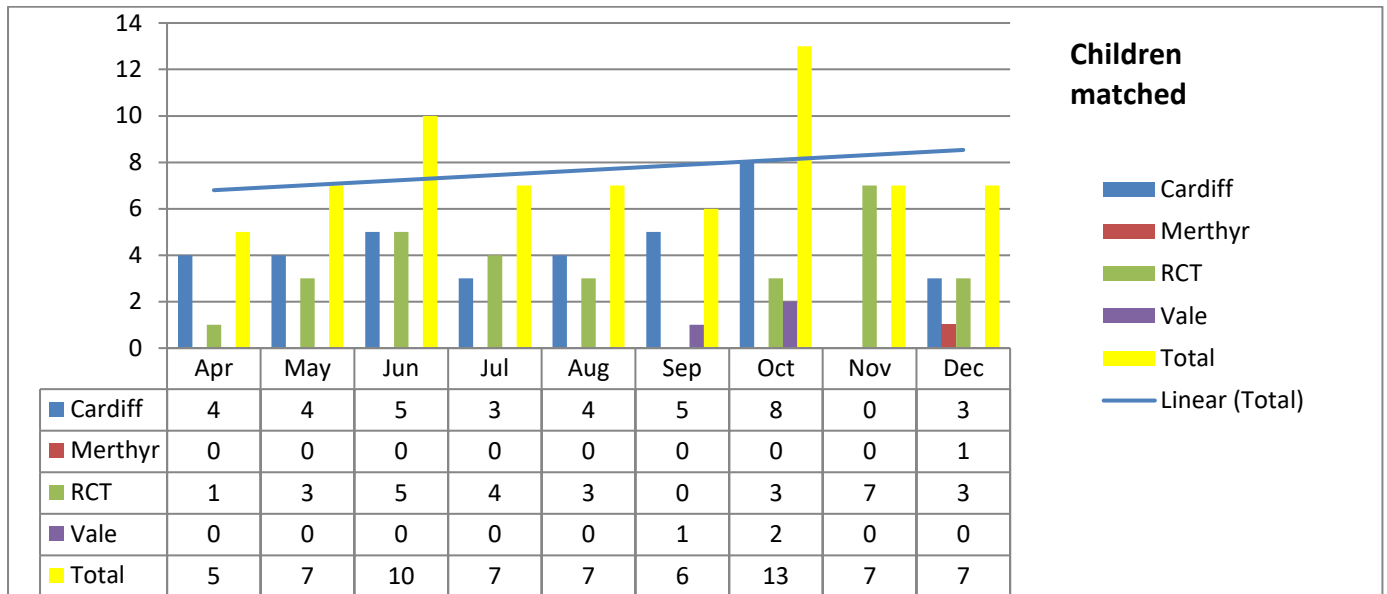
2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
Total	27	5	31	7	70

Adoption Orders are up on the previous year.

Number of Adoption Orders Granted – Comparative Data



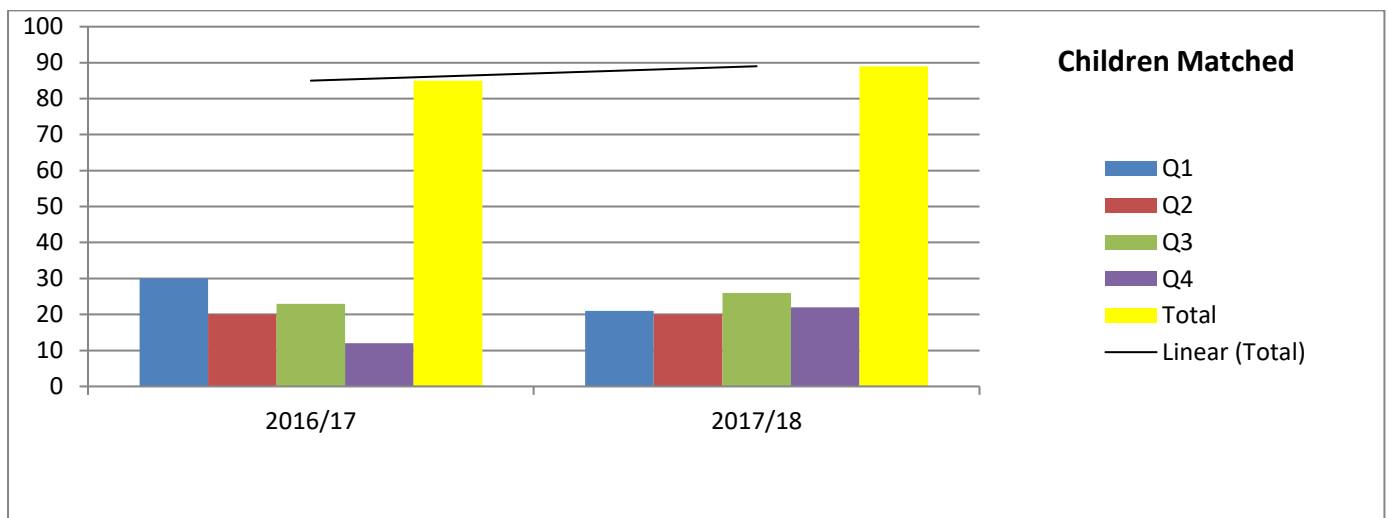
Number of children Matched (approved by Agency Decision Maker) since April 2017



2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
Total	43	1	42	5	89

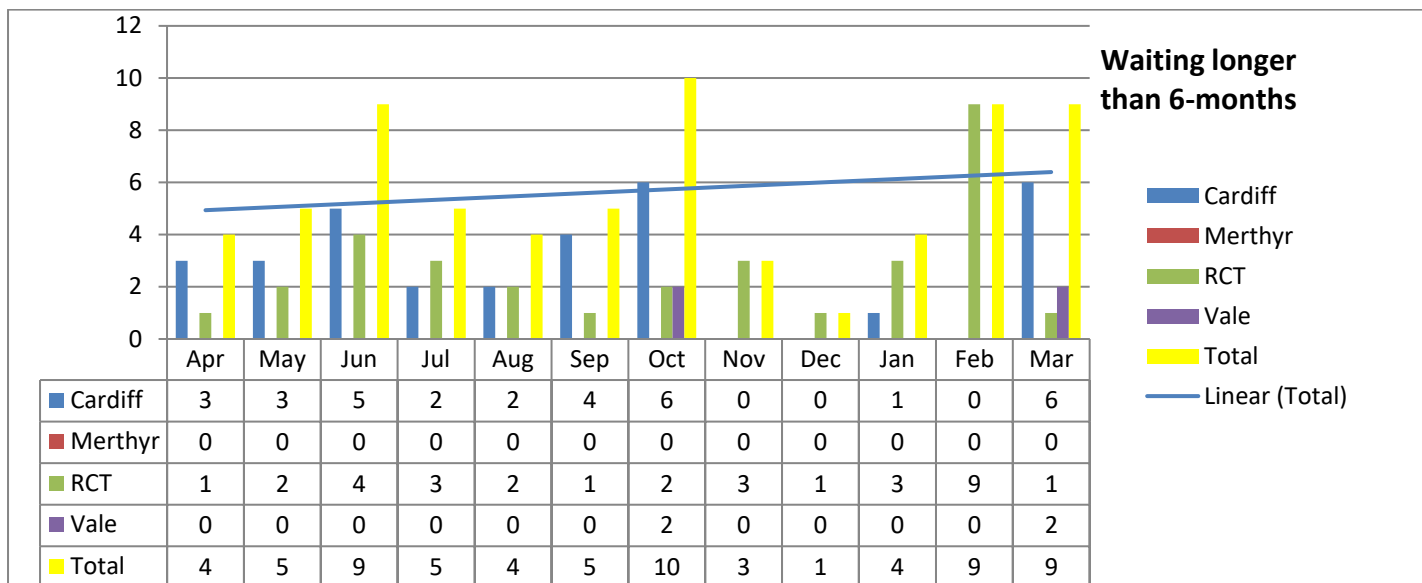
This figure represents those children who were matched but not placed at the end of the period.

Number of children Matched (approved by Agency Decision Maker) – Comparative Data



Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2016/17	30	20	23	12	85
2017/18	21	20	26	22	89
Total	51	40	49	34	174

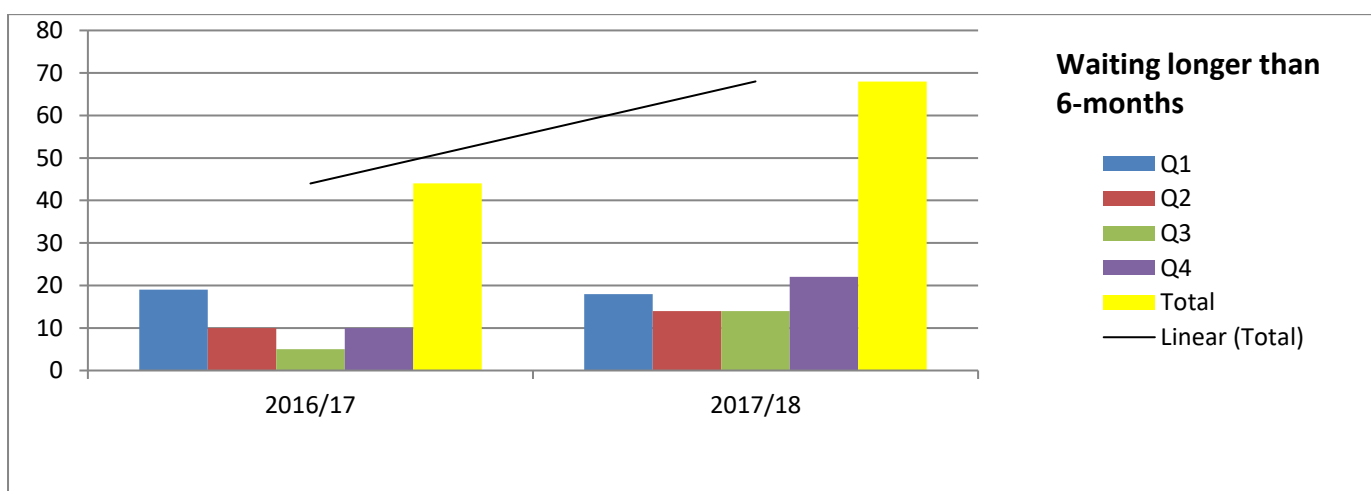
Number of children Matched in since April 2017 who have waited longer than 6 months (or 3 months for a relinquished child under 6 months of age) to progress from date of 'Should be Placed' for Adoption Decision to date of Agency Decision to approve Match



2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
Total	32	0	32	4	68

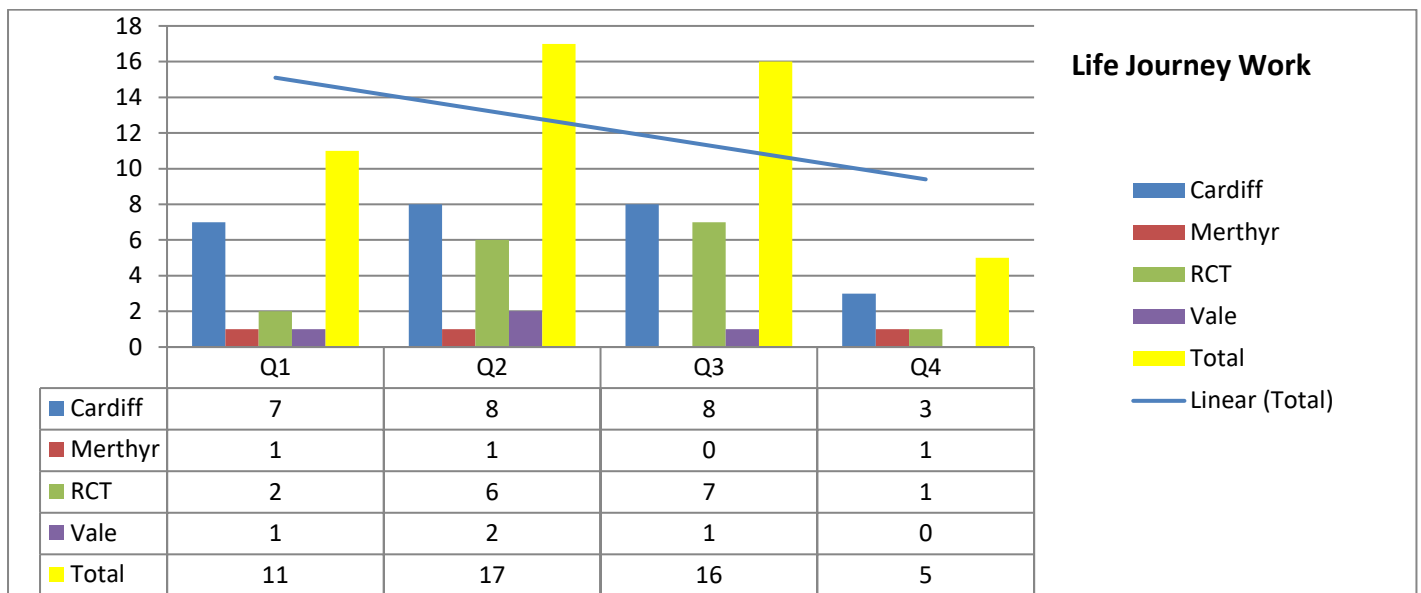
These graphs are an indicator of the increase in the numbers waiting longer than six months for placement.

Number of children Matched who have waited longer than 6 months (or 3 months for a relinquished child under 6 months of age) to progress from date of Should be Placed for Adoption Decision to date of Agency Decision to approve Match – Comparative Data



Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2016/17	19	10	5	10	44
2017/18	16	16	14	22	68
Total	35	26	19	32	112

Number of children Placed for Adoption since April 2017 for whom Life Journey Material has been provided to adopters by the time of 2nd Adoption Review



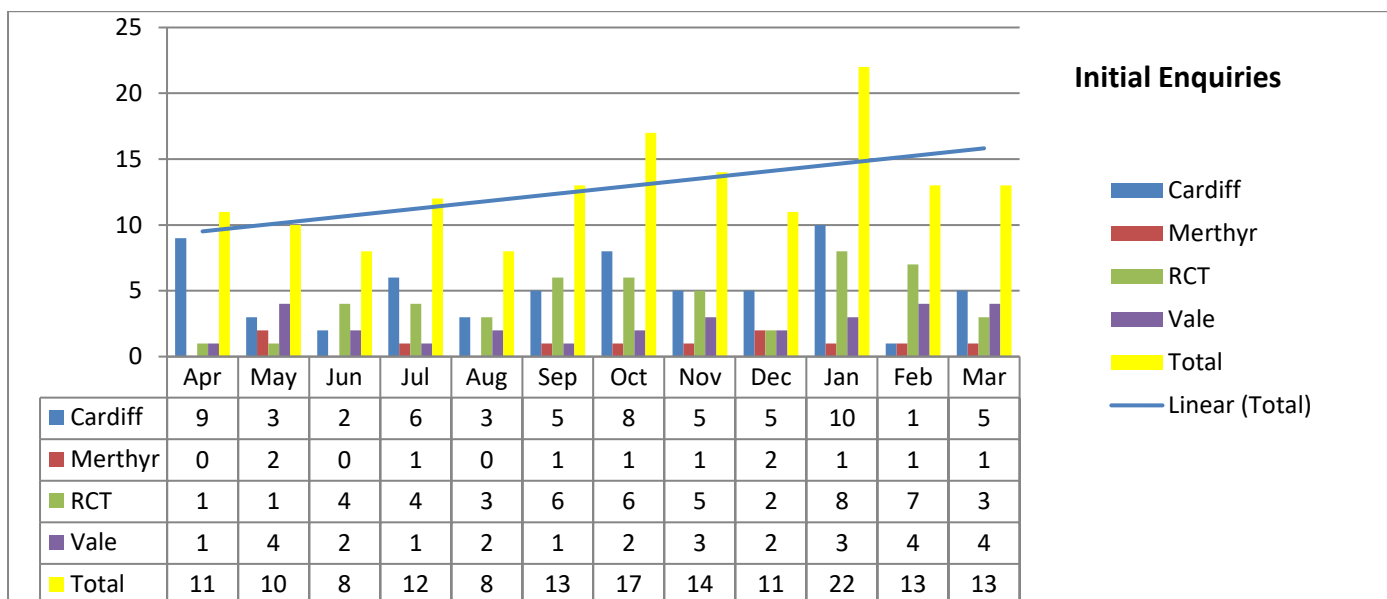
Totals 2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
2 nd Adoption Review	44	2	23	3	72
Life Journey provided	26	3	21	4	49
					68%

* This % is representative of VVC’s figures broken down by local authority.

NAS figures show VVC’s overall quarterly performance as 73%, 89%, 84% and 46% with the average for 2017/18 at 67% compared to an average of 61% last year.

Whilst NAS indicates an improvement this % presents a worrying picture and this remains a key improvement priority for the region.

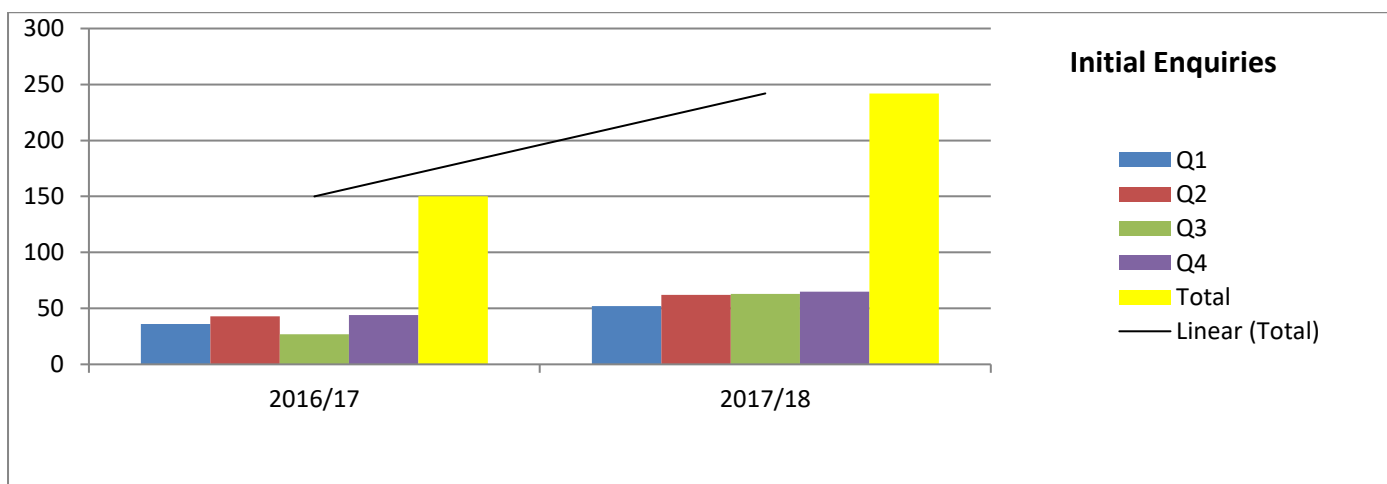
Number of Initial Enquiries regarding Adoption received since April 2017 - Total number of initial enquiries received = 242 of which 90 (37%) we are not able to allocate to a local authority as they were received by email. This is something we are continuing to address.



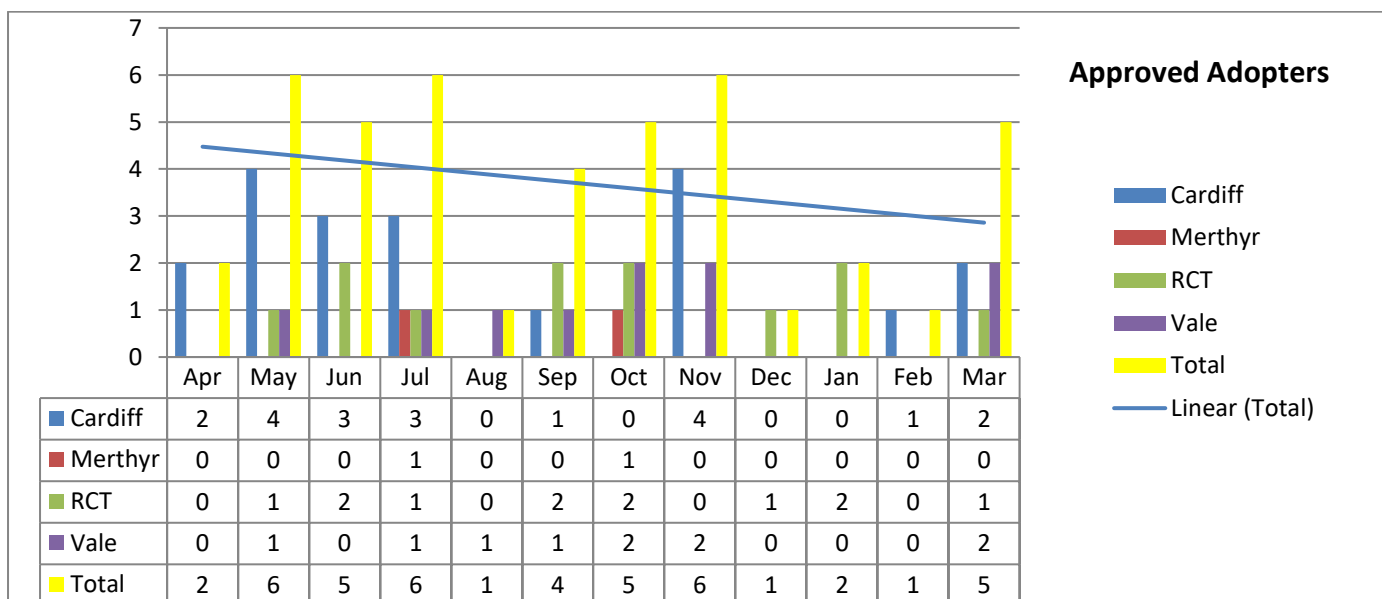
2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
Total	62	11	50	29	152 (actual 242)

These graphs indicate the breakdown by authority. There are a large number where the geographical area is unknown.

Number of Initial Enquiries regarding Adoption received – Comparative Data



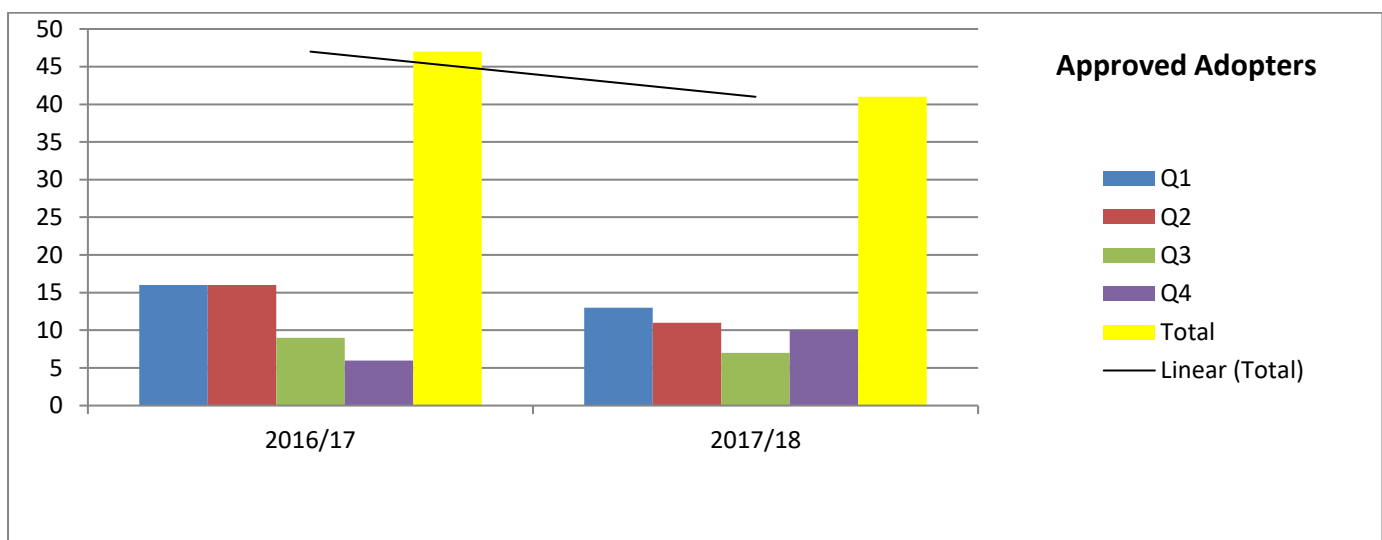
Number of Prospective Adopters receiving Agency Decision to approve as suitable to adopt since April 2017 – Note; there were 10 approvals in Q4, 2 of which were from outside VVC



2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	OTHER	Total
Total	20	2	12	10	2	46

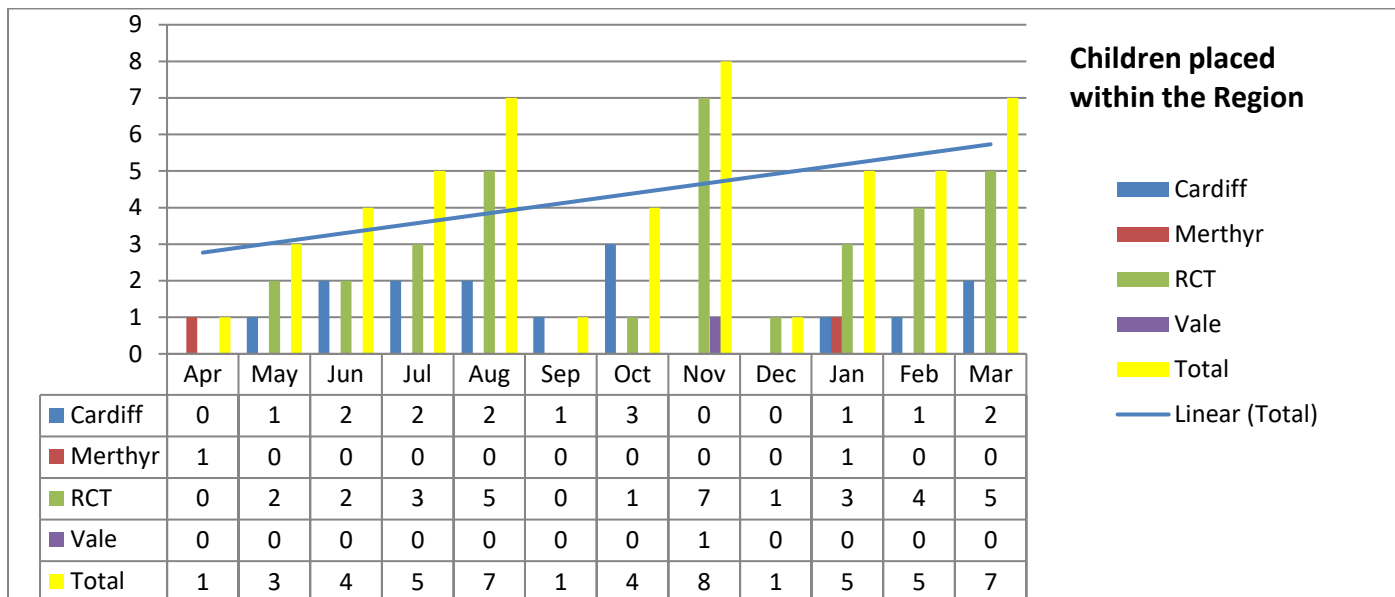
These figures demonstrate a slight decrease on the previous year. Unfortunately six couples withdrew during assessment and one post approval which has had an impact upon the region meeting its' goal.

Number of Prospective Adopters receiving Agency Decision to approve as suitable to adopt – Comparative Data

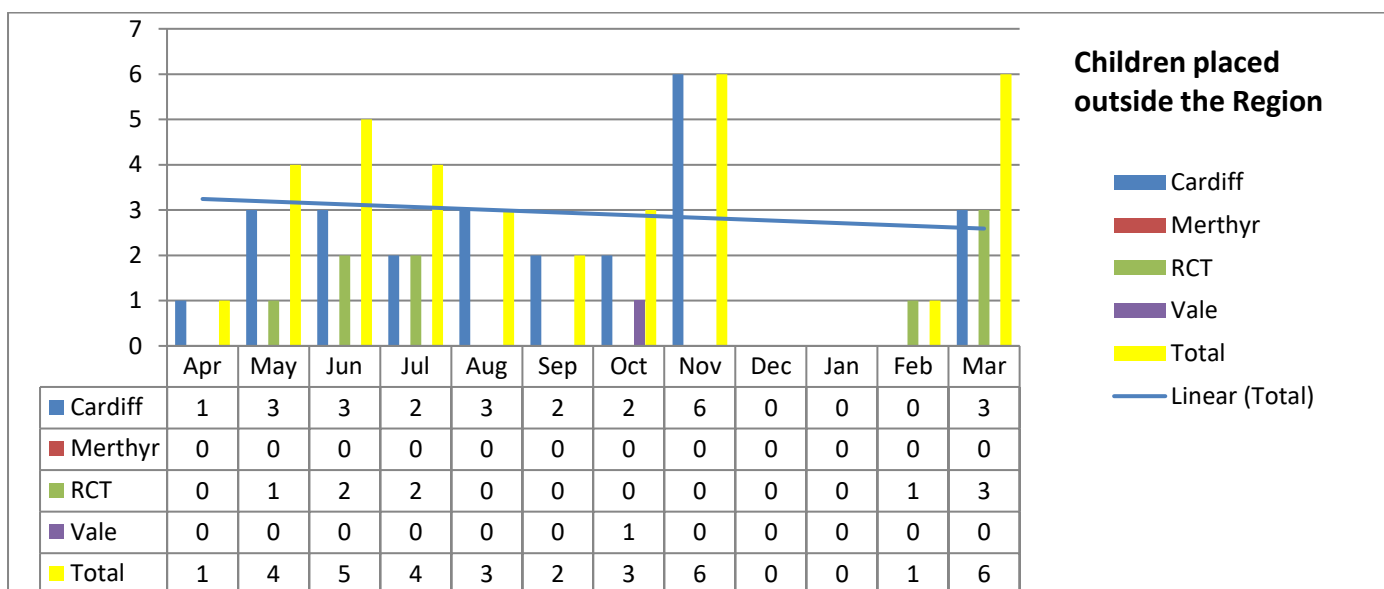


Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2016/17	16	16	9	6	47
2017/18	13	11	12	10	46
Total	29	27	21	16	93

CHILDREN PLACED WITHIN REGION AND OUTSIDE REGION



2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
Total	15	2	33	1	51



2017/18	Cardiff	Merthyr	RCT	VOG	Total
Total	25	0	9	1	35

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

13 October 2017

Rachel Evans
 Head of Service
 Director's Office - Social Services
 Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock's Office
 Barry



County Hall
 Cardiff,
 CF10 4UW
 Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
 Caerdydd,
 CF10 4UW
 Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Rachel

The Members of Cardiff Council's Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee would like to thank you for providing them with a copy of the Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Service's Annual Report, as hosts for the collaborative, and answering the Members questions.

The Committee also wished to thank, Angela Harris, Regional Adoption Manager Vale of Glamorgan Council, together with Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Children & Families, Tony Young, Director of Social Services and Irfan Alam Assistant Director Children's Services, for their attendance and the honest and open answers to the Members questions.

The Committee welcomed the report and agreed to commend it to the Management Board and Joint Committee for their approval. During the way forward the Members identified a number of points which they felt I should write to you about.

The Members were pleased to be updated on the actions identified in the previous annual report, but wished to receive a further update on the following actions which still required more work to be undertaken, namely:

- To develop opportunities for engagement and obtaining feedback from service users;
- To improve efficiency and reduce administrative costs of the Adoption Panel by implementing a paperless Panel system.

The Committee was however concerned to hear of the poor uptake of Birth Parents Counselling, the Members understood the sensitivities in engaging with Birth Parents, but considered that this area needs more focus.

The Committee was also concerned at the resource issues which had effected five social worker posts during the second half of last year. The Members requested that an update on the recruitment and organisation of these posts be provided as part of the response to this letter.

The Committee noted that a best value review was being undertaken which covered, demand, shortfall in staffing and adoption support. The Committee requested that a

copy of the best value review report be presented to Members, when it has been completed, along with the Collaborative's Business plan.

Finally the Committee discussed at some length the Link Matching service and Activities Days which helped potential adopters in identifying children for adoption. The Members wondered how effective these were in helping people to adopt and requested that an impact assessment of the Link Matching and Activities Days be undertaken and included in this year's annual report.

I hope that the comments, advice and requests for information, detailed above, will be of use and support in the adoption of children across the region and in particular in Cardiff, and I look forward to a positive response to this letter within a month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', written over a light grey rectangular background.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager
CC Councillor Graham Hinchey, Board Member
CC Tony Young, Board Member



Vale, Valleys
and Cardiff
Adoption | **Mabwysiadu**
yn y Fro, y Cymoedd
a Chaerdydd

Date/Dyddiad: 15 November 2017
Ask for/Gofynwch am: Angela Harris
Telephone/Rhif ffôn: 01443 490460

Appendix C

County Councillor Lee Bridgeman
Chairperson
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Bridgeman

Re: Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Collaborative Annual Report 2016-17

Thank you for letter dated 13 October 2017 concerning the presentation of the above report to your Scrutiny Committee on 6 October 2017. I will address the points upon which you seek further clarification as follows:

1. Actions from 2015-16 Report:

To develop opportunities for engagement and obtaining feedback from service users

VVC currently facilitates two family fundays and a monthly toddler group for adoptive families. Adoptive parents have been involved in the preparation and delivery of these activities. In addition the service provides a quarterly support group which has focused upon topics of interest and issues raised by families.

Adoptive families within the region have been encouraged to engage in consultation events held by the National Adoption Service (NAS). In the spring of 2017 NAS commissioned the Institute of Public Care to undertake a web based survey of adoptive families in respect of adoption support services. VVC had the highest participation rate in Wales and these findings have now been fed back to the region to inform service development.

VVC has now developed its' website which provides a ready means of contact with the service for potential adoptive parents. VVC has also funded membership of Adoption UK for the past two years which provide opportunities for engagement. Adopted children 7 + are also referred to Talk Adoption which provides support for children and young people. Talk Adoption provide activities as part of our fundays.

The service has recognised the need to obtain more direct means of obtaining feedback upon the services delivered and has worked with the Participation Officer in

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Pontypridd CF37 2TB**

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Catherine, Pontypridd, CF37 2TB
www.adopt4vvc.co.uk**

**Correspondence is welcomed in Welsh or English/Croesawir Gohebiaeth yn y
Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg**

Tudalen 109

developing questionnaires. Capacity issues within the service has impacted upon embedding the use of these questionnaires into practice and so this still remains an area for development.

To improve efficiency and administrative costs of the Adoption Panel by implementing a paperless Panel system.

The development of a paperless digital Panel system remains a key priority for VVC. As indicated previously tablets have been purchased for members alongside a licence to use a secure web portal, Egress. Panel members and staff have received training in the use of Egress and as part of an implementation plan, have trialled the use of tablets to access the Panel information. As a result of these trials some technical difficulties have been identified which are being worked on by the IT Department. It is anticipated that once these are resolved then full implementation of the system can be put in place. It is anticipated the digital Panel will be launched within this financial year.

The efficiencies and benefits of moving to a digital Panel system have been considered as part of the Best Value Review.

2. Birth Parent Counselling

The provision and take up of birth parent counselling is monitored closely as part of the Performance Management Framework and regions have to report on a quarterly and annual basis in respect of these measures. VVC's performance is not unusual in respect of this work and is comparable to other regions with a similar workload.

Nonetheless, Social Workers continue to strive through their individual practice to explore ways of engaging parents more effectively by utilising planned contact sessions, home visits and other venues to meet parents. The region is also trialling a birth parent support group to try another means of engagement.

3. Resources

The five vacancies outlined in the report have all been recruited to. Staff were appointed from late May – mid July 2017 and all have remained in post. Three of the staff have been employed in Family Finding and two in Adoption Support. Some temporary agency cover was put in place to cover Family Finding which ceased prior to the last appointment.

4. Best Value Review

The timetable for conclusion of this process is planned for December 2017 when the final report is scheduled to be presented to VVC's Joint Committee. This will provide

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Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg Tudalen 110**

a mechanism for feedback into the respective local authority by the nominated elected member who sits on the Joint Committee. The presentation of this Review to the four Scrutiny Committees will be considered with a view to seeking common agreement as to the most appropriate approach to this.


5. Link Maker and Activity Days.

Link Maker has been endorsed by NAS and is a service which all regions subscribe to. It is also widely used by English authorities, where it originated. VVC subscribes to Link Maker, although the subscription this year has been funded by Welsh Government pending the outcome of the tendering exercise in respect of the Welsh Adoption Register. Link Maker provides a useful platform for profiling children and for adopters to access directly. NAS undertook an early evaluation of the effectiveness of Link Maker and it is possible to obtain regional reports to assist in analysing usage and potential matches. Some of this can be incorporated in this year's Annual Report.

The use of Activity Days are in their infancy in Wales but again much more developed practice in England. Nevertheless, the region has been proactive in engaging with this process as an alternative means of securing adoptive placements. A further Welsh day is being planned by the Wales Adoption Register in March 2018. This will provide more data and a further opportunity to evaluate their effectiveness which can then form part of this year's annual report.

I trust this addresses the points you have raised in addition to our attendance at Committee.

Yours Sincerely



Angela Harris
Regional Adoption Manager.

**Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption, Level 7, Ty Pennant, Catherine Street,
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Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Children's Services Scrutiny Report

Quarter 2 2018



Executive Summary

What's working well?

- Improving performance in timeliness of Well-being Assessments
- Good performance in managing sickness absence
- Positive Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection Report of Crosslands Children's Home
- Commissioning Strategy under development and advanced planning of new residential provision
- Positive engagement with workforce and partners to understand priorities
- Workforce strategy developed
- Decision making panels implemented

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What are we worried about?

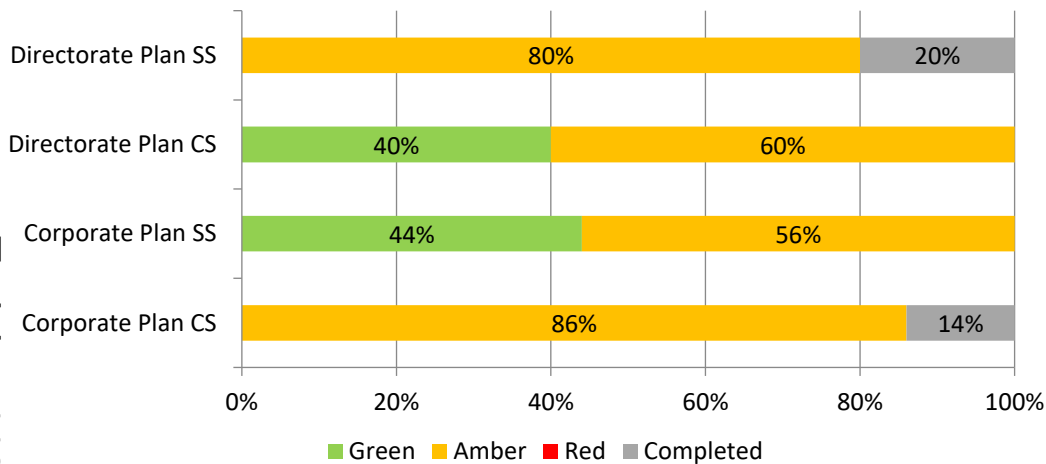
- Levels of agency workforce and variable caseloads.
- High numbers of looked after children and associated pressures on placement provision
- Low numbers of child protection registrations.
- Numbers of children waiting for adoption 12 months after Order made.
- Fitness for purpose of current staffing structures.
- Low numbers of children looked after returned home from care during the year

What do we need to do?

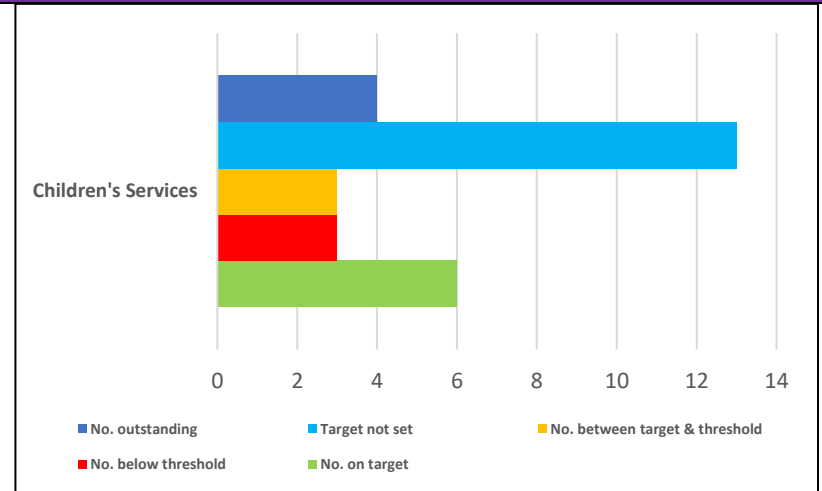
- Develop a 3 year strategy and implementation plan “Improving outcomes for all our children” and associated work streams to ensure a clear vision and actions in place to address all areas of improvement.
- Deliver a recruitment and retention strategy to retain, recruit and develop a suitably experienced and knowledgeable workforce.
- Implement a quality performance framework that evidences strengths and areas for improvements.
- Create a culture that is strength based, rights based and outcome focused with the child at the centre of all that we do.
- Evidence that all activities make a positive difference to the lives of the children and young people
- Develop a clear pathway for the “Children’s Journey” in Cardiff
- Refresh Signs of Safety implementation plan

Quarterly Performance

Progress against Corporate Plan & Directorate Delivery Plan Actions



Performance Indicator Overview Quarter 2



13 no target = 11 not appropriate; 2 new indicators, baseline being set

What's working well?

•Cardiff Youth Offending Services (YOS)

Cardiff YOS has developed a knife crime awareness programme, which has been delivered over the past two months to a large number of young people on a range of Court Orders. The programme is built upon the principles of a successful programme that has been developed and delivered in Scotland; **'No Knives, Better Lives'**. The programme is built upon the four **Rs principle: Responsibility, Risk, Resilience and Reassurance** with the focus being on issues that are particular to Cardiff and relevant to the communities' young people live in.

•Child Friendly City strategy

The Child Friendly City strategy has been developed and was launched at Cardiff Public Services Board on the 20th November, to coincide with the United Nations (UN) World Children Day. Children looked after are at the centre of many of the actions within the strategy, and the rights approach is underpinning all improvement work in Children's Services.

What are we worried about?

• **Social Worker Vacancies.** 19 vacancies were filled during Quarter 2 (ten with new social workers, two through transfers and seven through the promotion of existing social workers). The creation of a further seven new posts has affected the vacancy figure this quarter. The percentage of vacancies in Quarter 1 was 28.2% and has increased to 31.20% in Quarter 2. This is a significant indicator for improving outcomes in the service area as a permanent, competent workforce is critical to good standards of practice. The reliance upon agency workers to cover gaps in the social work workforce is also costly. There is limited availability of agency workers to cover vacancies which poses a challenge to managing the work load on a temporary basis, whilst the workforce recruitment and retention strategy is implemented.

• **Increase in Demand in Childrens' Services.** There has been a significant increase in the number of Children Looked After which presents challenges to securing the best outcomes for all our children and effectively managing the service and the financial pressures. Childrens services overspend position (**Month 4**) of £3.621 million, there are projected overspends of £3.844 million in respect of external placements for children looked after, and this is after taking into account an assumed drawdown of £950,000 contingency budget set aside for this specific purpose.

• **Placement Availability for Children.** Significant increase in demand for residential and foster care placements children looked after with insufficient range and availability of placements both resulting in an increased number of children being placed outside of Cardiff and neighbouring authorities.

• **Securing opportunities for the most vulnerable and disengaged young people** remains a challenge. The percentage of care leavers in education, training and employment at 12 months after leaving care, was 49.4% for 2017-18 against a target of 60% for the year.

What do we need to do?

•To address against **social work vacancies** a Workforce Project Group has been established and a Recruitment and Retention Strategy developed. A workforce “report card” to track vacancies and agency cover is in development. In the short term there will be a review and development of the Council’s recruitment website, mapping of the recruitment processes to ensure they are efficient and effective and strengthen of performance reporting on workforce related issues. . In the medium term the Council will develop and strengthen existing links with local universities and review and strengthen staff induction. Salary levels and the overall ‘offer’ to social workers will be reviewed. An analysis of retention / turnover data and a skills and gap analysis will inform future workforce planning activity, reviewing staff roles to ensure the workforce is able to meet the changing needs of Children’s Services in the future whilst successfully recruiting current vacancies. All of the work will be underpinned by robust stakeholder engagement with opportunities for existing staff and potential future staff (e.g. student social workers) to actively influence and shape what the future Children’s Services workforce looks like, using staff as ambassadors to encourage and attract both newly qualified and experienced social workers to come to Cardiff.

•To address **Placement Availability for Children** there is an objective in the 19/20 Directorate Plan to increase the quality and quantity of provision for children looked after to enable more children to be placed nearer to home by :

- Increasing the number of Local Authority Foster Carers by 2019/20
- Increasing the range of local residential provision by commissioning 20 new placements by 2022
- Work with the regional adoption service to increase the number of adoptive placements by 2019/20 (targets set by regional service)

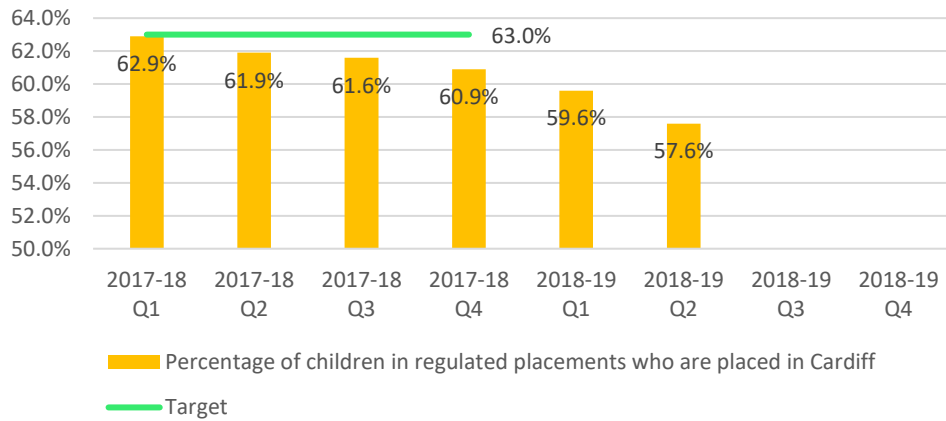
Work has also commenced on a **Cardiff Council Placement Commissioning Strategy which will be completed by March 2020.**

• To address **Securing opportunities for the most vulnerable and disengaged young people** there is an objective in the 19/20 Directorate Plan to :

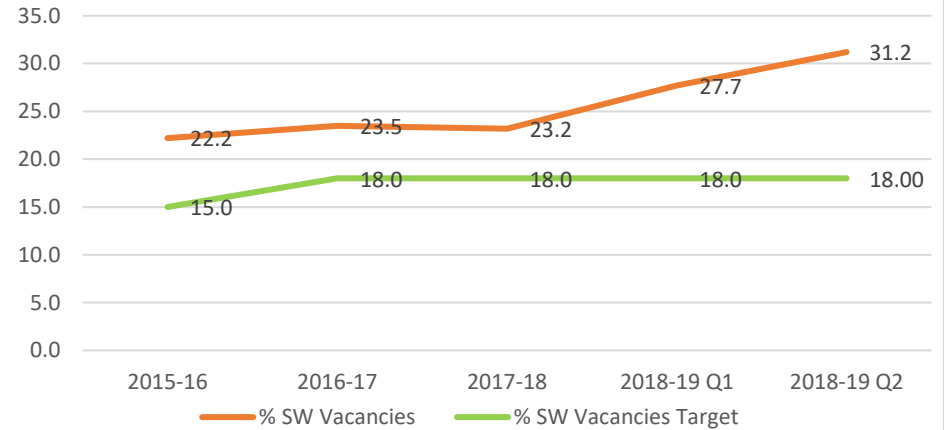
- Work in partnership with employment and education providers to increase education and training outcomes for Care Leavers by March 2020

Key Performance Indicators – Corporate Plan

CS LAC 58 Percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff

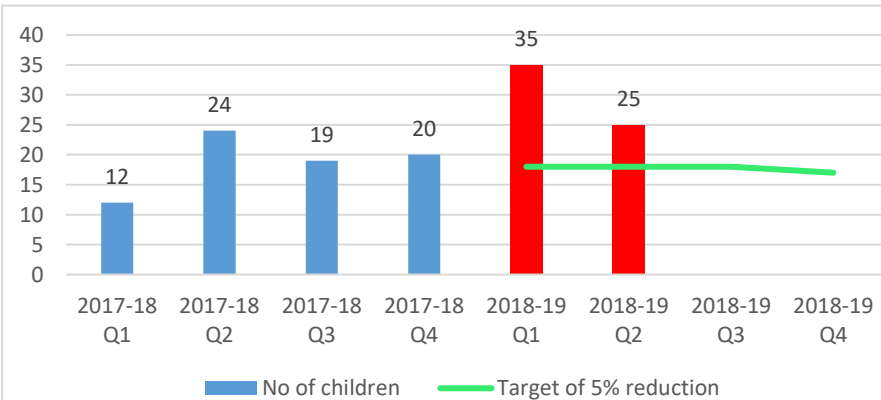


Staff 1 The percentage of social worker vacancies in all teams



Tudalen 119

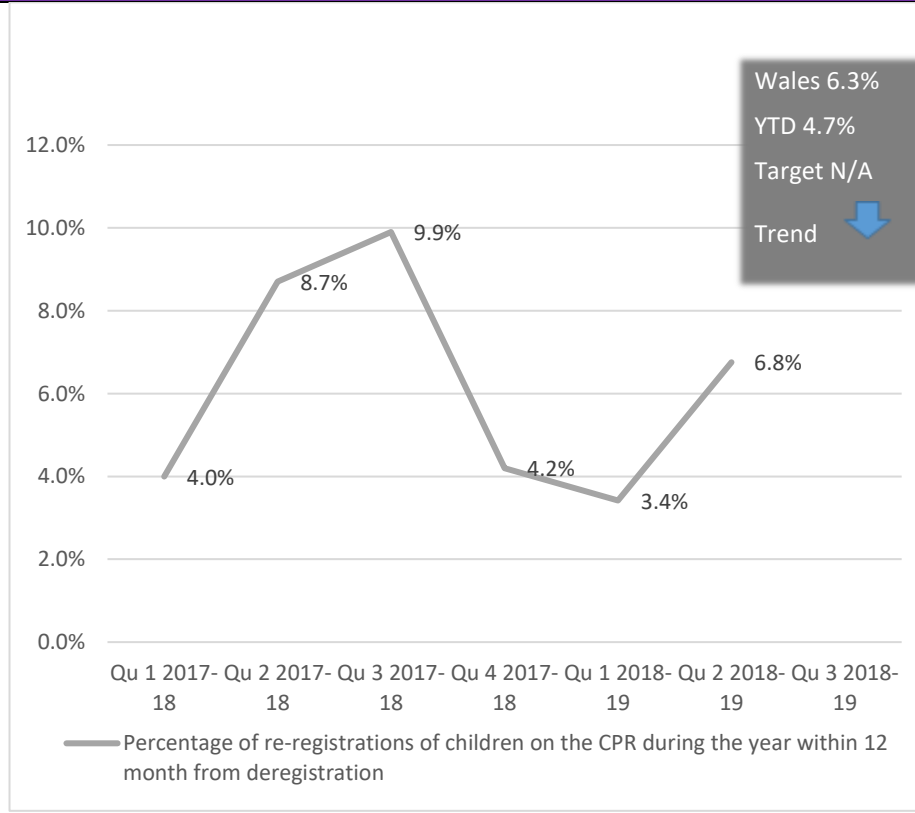
YOS 1 The number of children entering the criminal justice system.



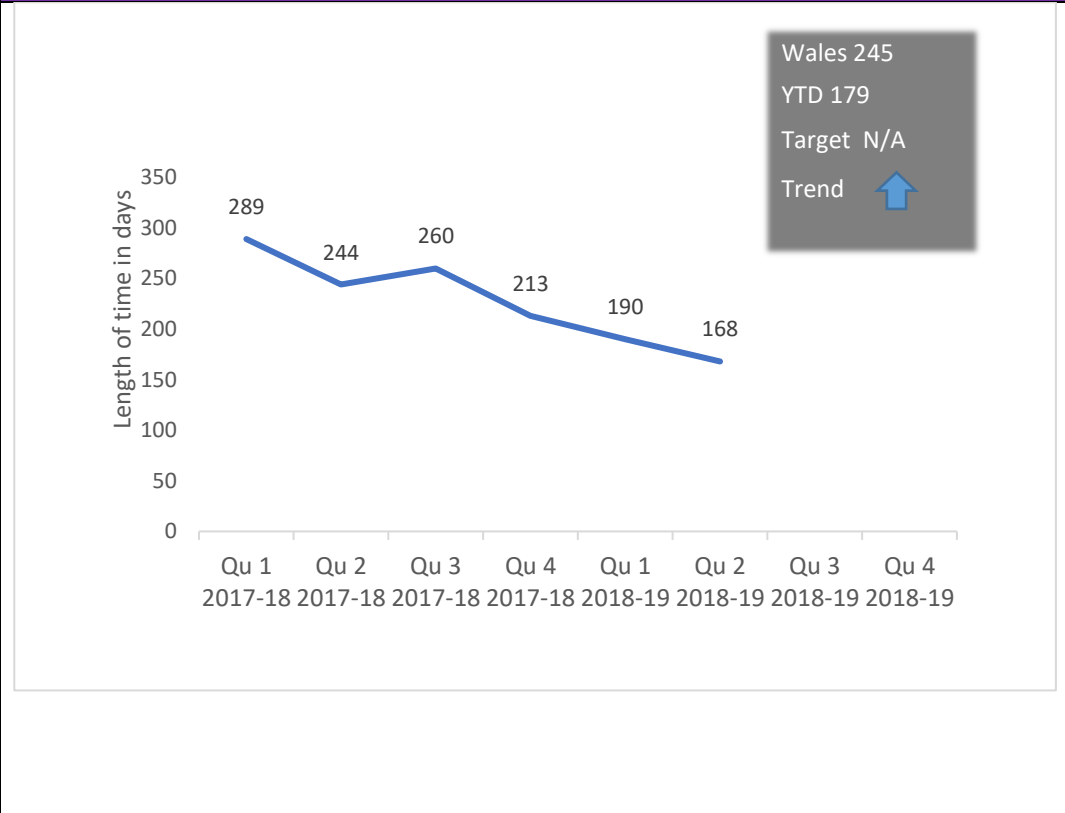
Key Performance Indicators - Directorate Delivery Plan

Strategic Directorate Priority 1 - Safeguarding

SSWB 27 Percentage of re-registrations of children on Child Protection Register during the year and within 12 months from deregistration



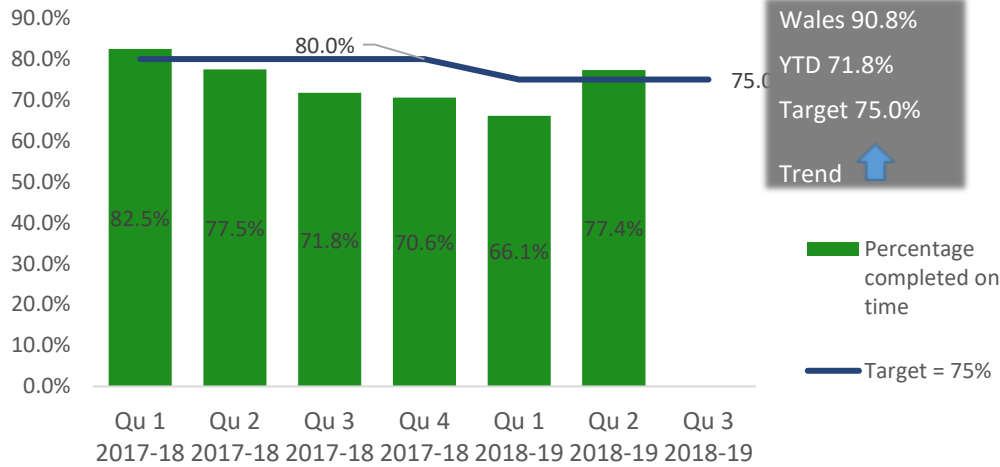
SSWB 28 Average length of time for all children who were on the Child Protection Register during the year.



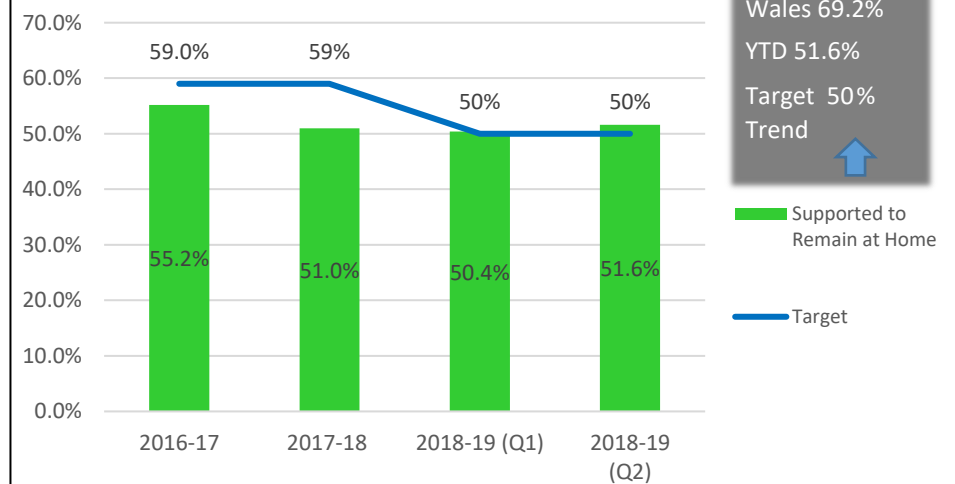
Updated 12/20

Strategic Directorate Priority 2 - Prevention & Independence

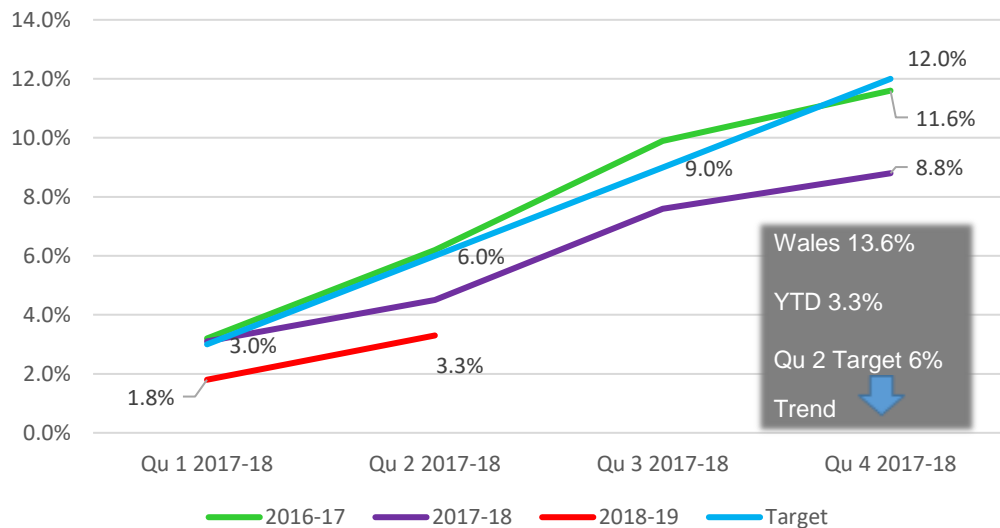
SSWB 24 Percentage of Well-being assessments completed within statutory timescales



SSWB 25 Percentage of children supported to remain living within their family

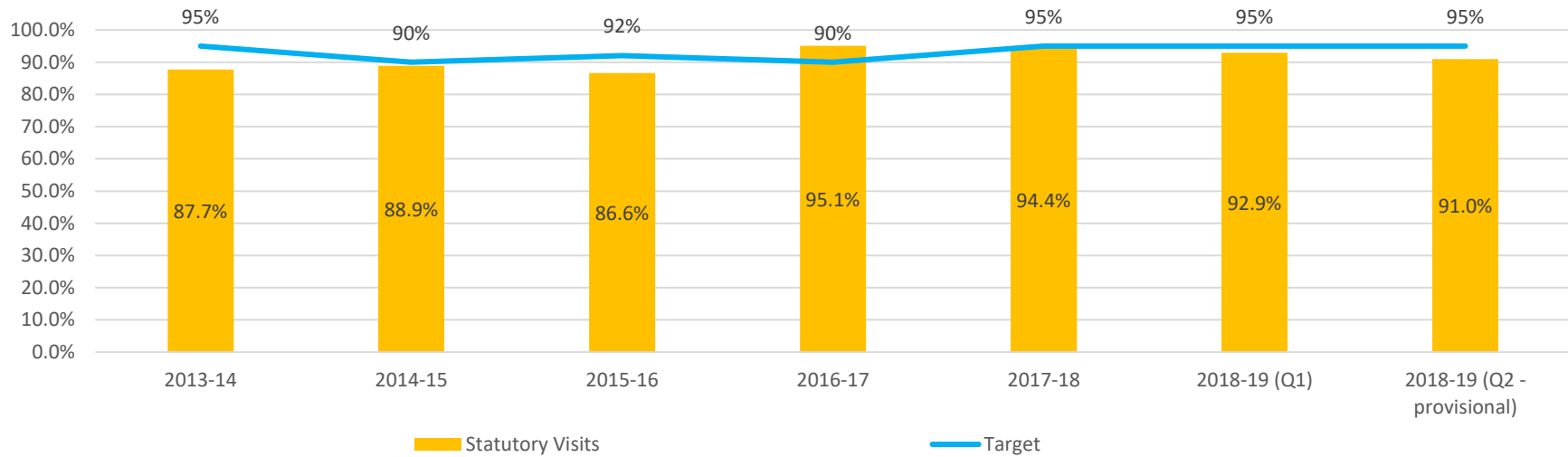


SSWB 26 Percentage of looked after children returned home from care during the year



Strategic Directorate Priority 3 - Care & Support (including transitions)

SCC/025 The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations.

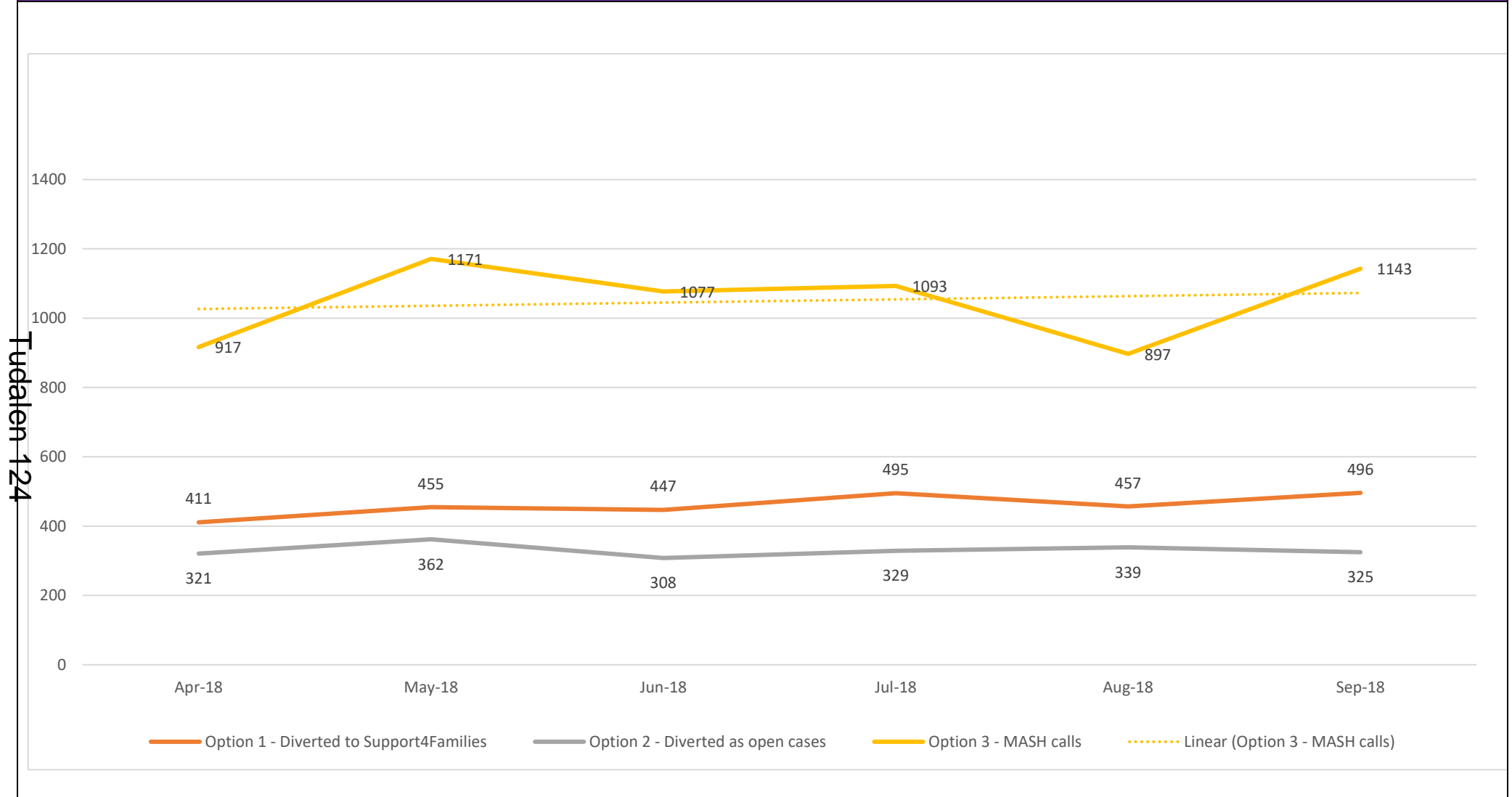


Prevention and Well-being

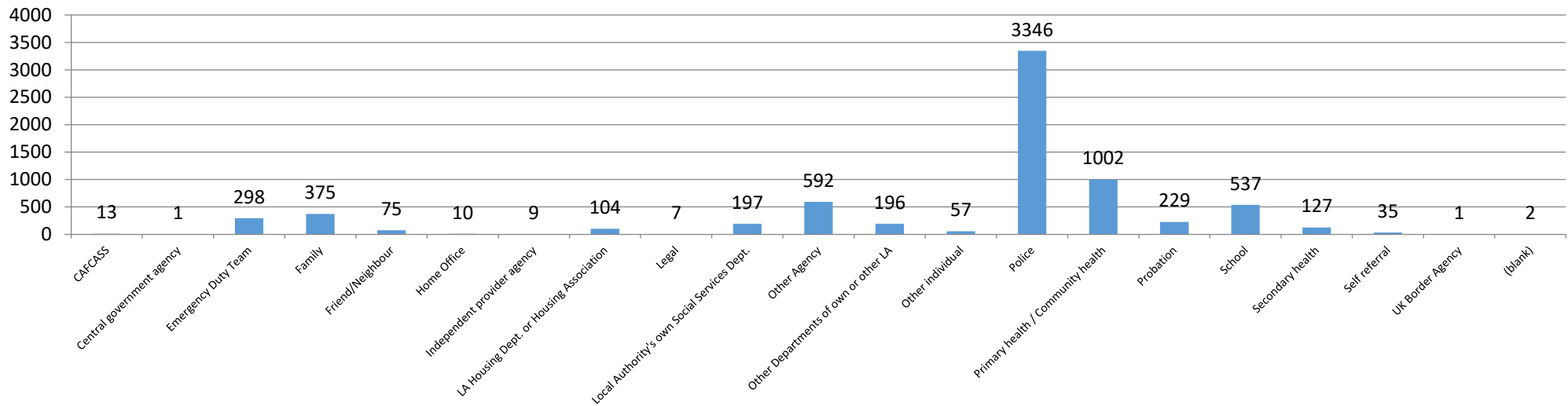
Tudalen 123

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Response Workers- engage with crisis situations with children who are on the edge of care and intervene in a timely way. • Family Intervention Support Workers - work with families so that children can remain at home. • Positive intervention to children and families in an increasing number of complex cases including across borders. • Introduction of panels at key points of the children's journey to support signs of safety decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high number of children and young people entering the looked after system. • The variable caseloads of social workers in the intake and assessment teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent analysis of the reasons for child or young person becoming looked after. • Implementation of recruitment and retention plan

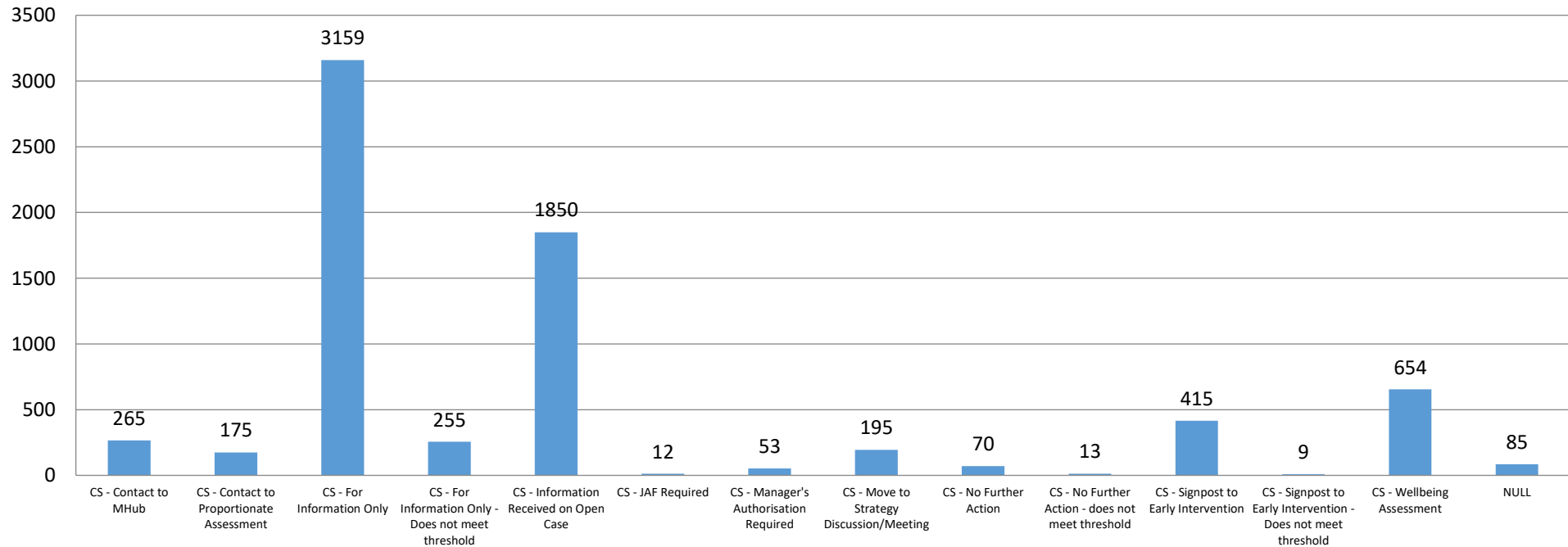
Support4Families and MASH diverted calls



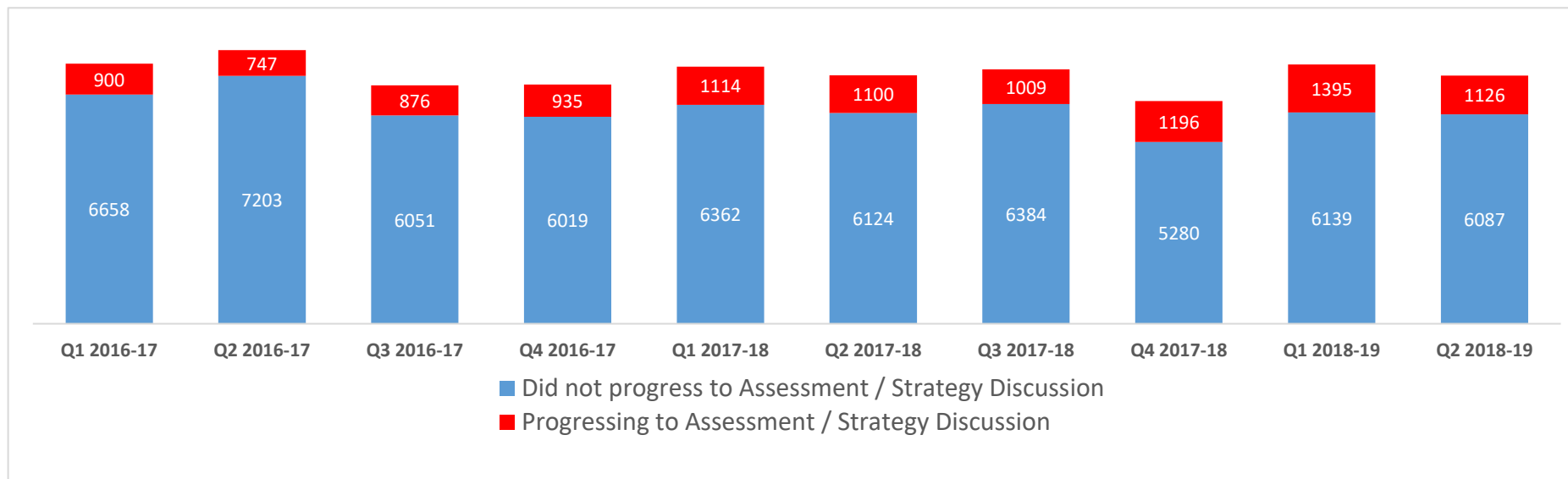
Source of Well-being Contacts / Referrals during Quarter 2



Outcome of Well-being contacts / referrals during Quarter 2



Proportion of Contacts requiring assessment



Assessment and outcome focused care planning

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timeliness of well-being assessments• Percentage of well-being assessments completed within statutory timescales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low number of contacts result in an assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review decision making through quality assurance framework• Refresh Signs of Safety Implementation Plan.• Agree key performance targets.• Review the quality of care planning via the audit framework and IPC independent review

Key Stats

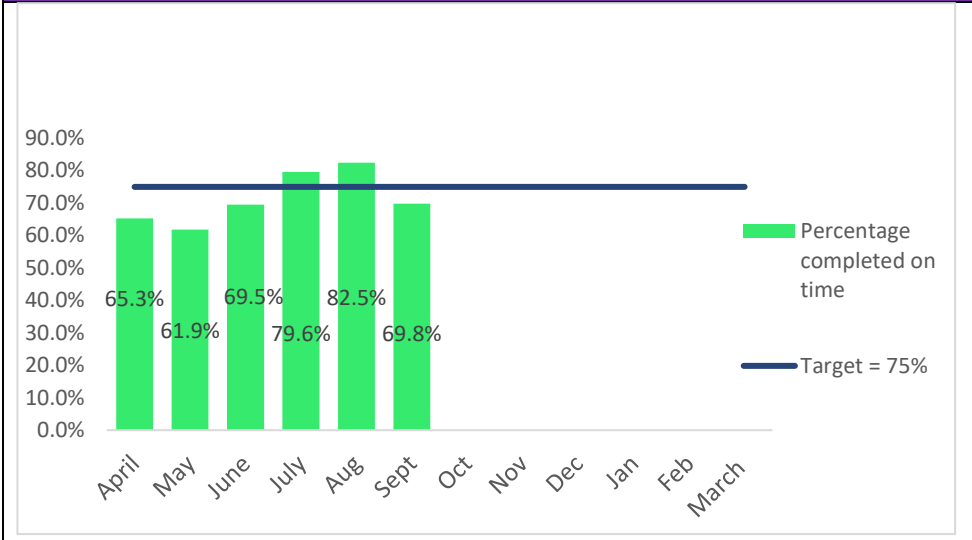
Percentage of well-being assessments completed within statutory timescales.

Target = 75%

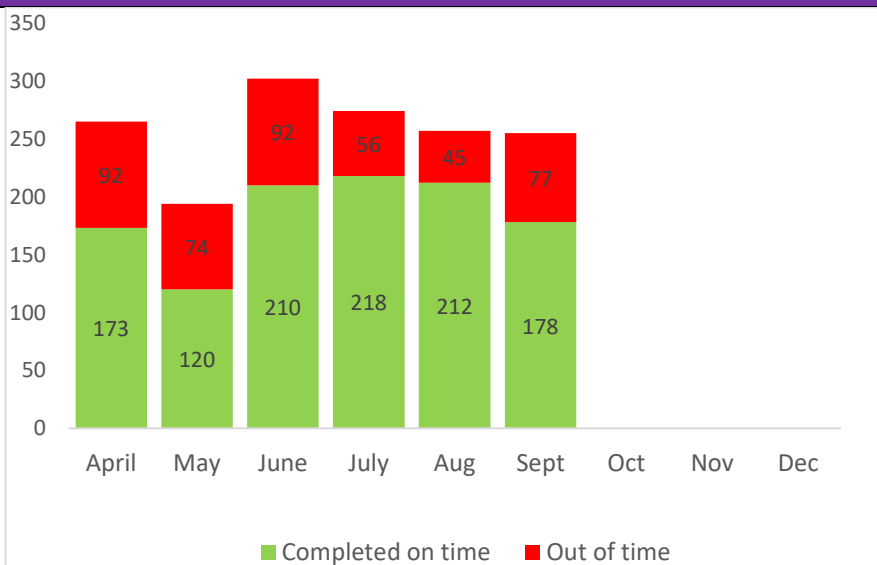
Quarter 2 performance = 77.4% (608 / 786)

The number of incomplete well-being assessments at end of quarter 2 was 319, 31 of which were out of time.

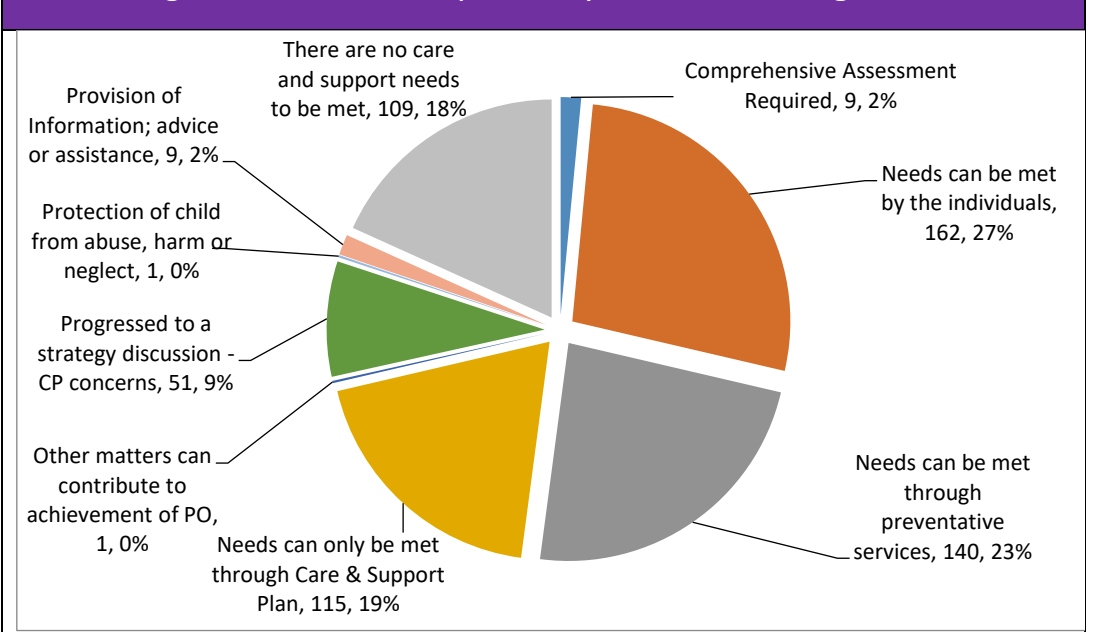
Percentage of well-being assessments completed within statutory timescales



Number of well-being assessments completed during the month



Well-being Assessments completed by outcome during Quarter 2.

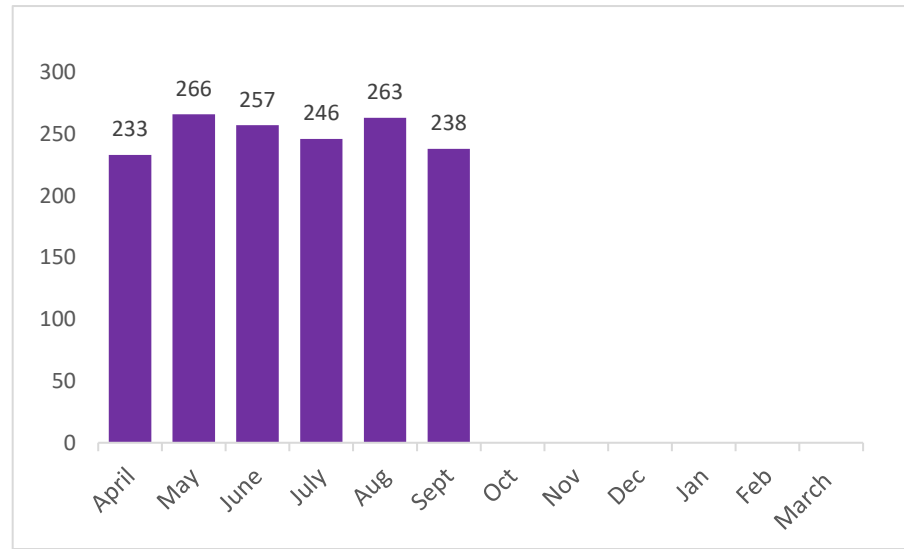


Safeguarding

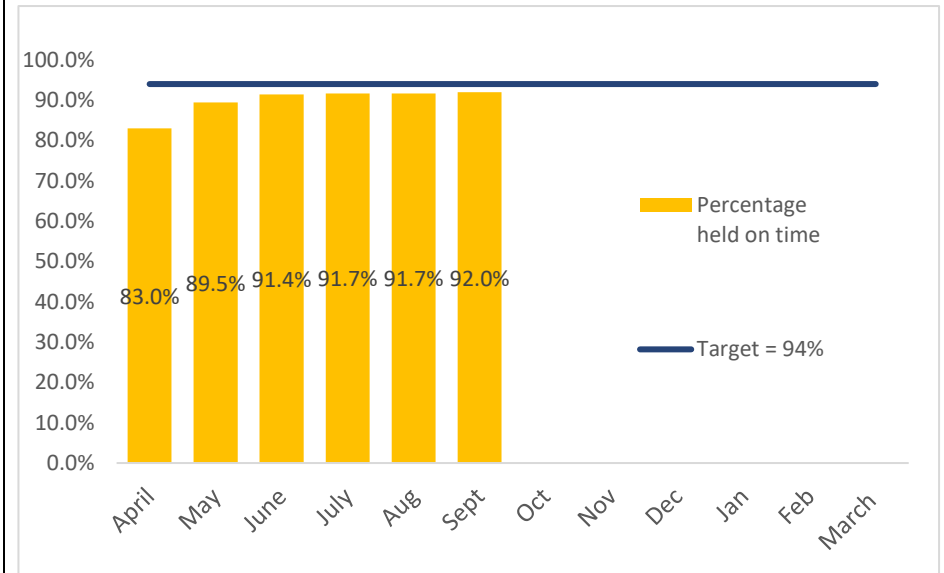
Tudalen 129

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of children on the Child Protection Register allocated a social worker • Signs of Safety is used as a framework for the Child Protection Conferences • IPC identified once Child or Young Person is involved in the Child Protection process there are robust systems in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed recording of reviews • The following are unavailable this quarter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scc.021 Looked After Child Reviews held on time – CS LAC 53 Percentage of parent / person with PR who were engaged regarding their child's looked after review. – CS LAC 49 Percentage of children/ young people who were engaged regarding their looked after review. • The following is provisional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scc.025 The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year. • There appears to be a low number of children and young people on the Child Protection Register compared to the number of looked after children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address delays in minutes being completed for Child Protection conferences and looked after review • Develop a clear plan around how we intend to engage with Children and young people and their families and how we can support meaningful participation. We can link this into the Child Friendly Cities programme. • Review decision making processed to ensure children and young people are supported via Child Protection plans where appropriate prior to becoming looked after.

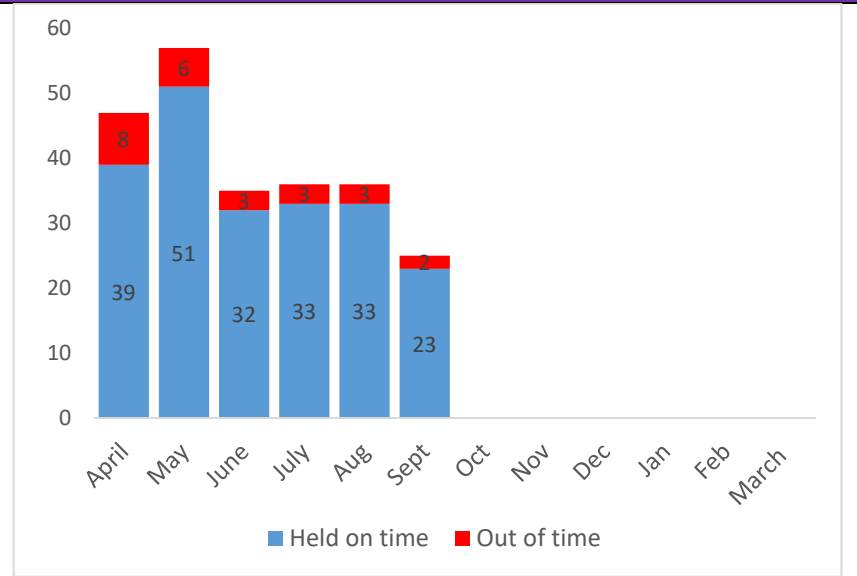
Number of children on the Child Protection Register



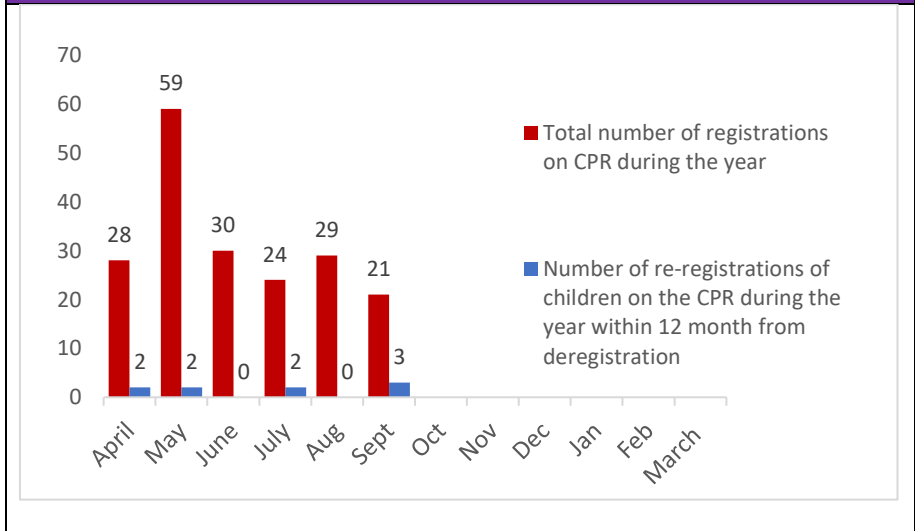
Percentage of Initial Case Conferences held on time



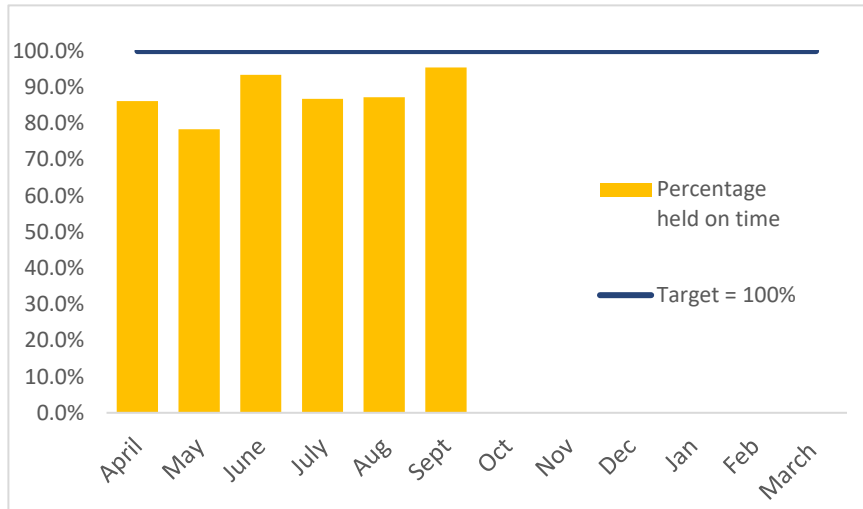
No of initial case conferences held during the month



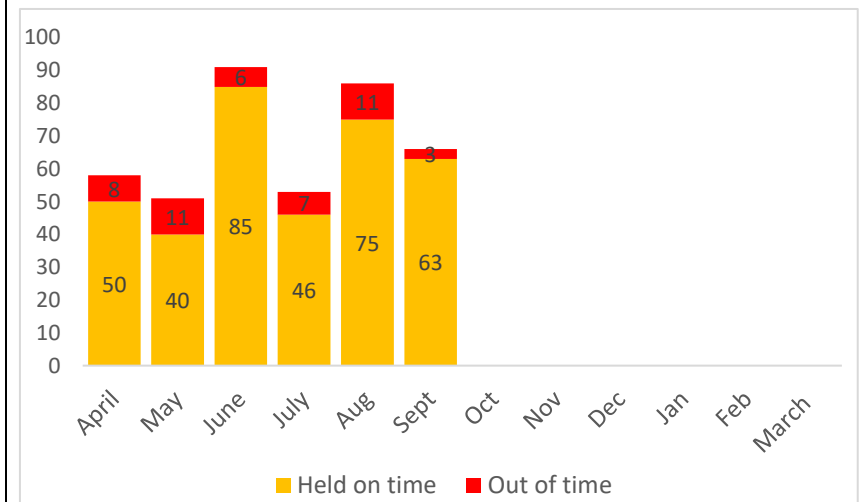
Number of children registered and re-registered onto the Child Protection Register



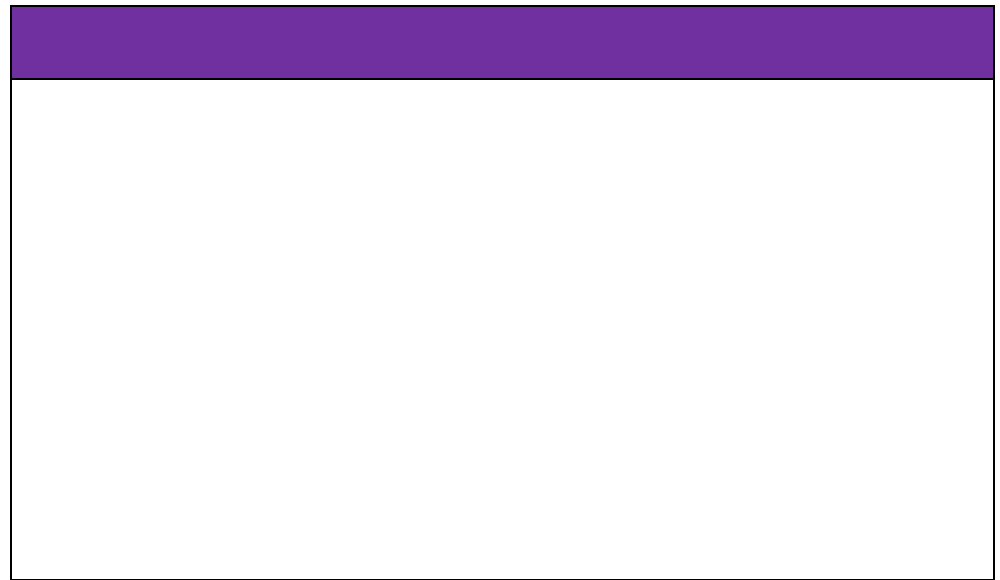
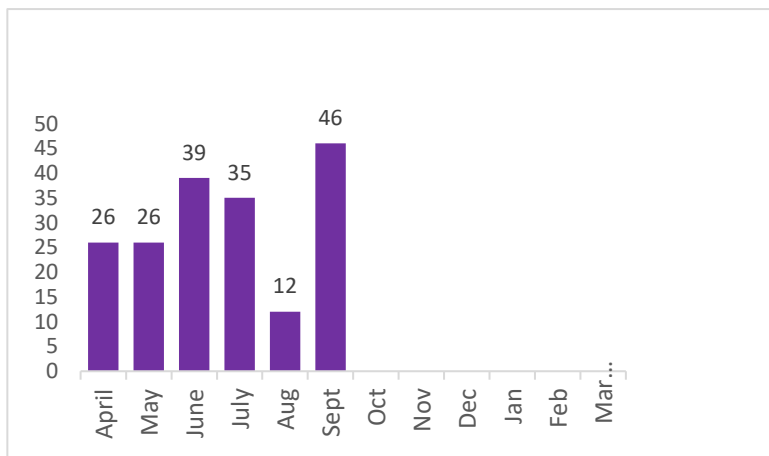
Percentage of Review Case Conferences held on time



Number of review case conferences due and held on time during the month



Number of children removed from the Child Protection Register



Looked After Children

Tudalen 132

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of looked after children allocated to a social worker. • Signs of safety is evident in recordings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes to step child or young person down from being looked after need further development • The high number of children and young people placed out of area. • Low numbers of kinship carers. • Low numbers of Local Authority foster carers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematically review all placements. • Commissioning strategy under development which will increase local residential provision. • Review systems in place to ensure all opportunities for family placements are explored. • We have a plan in place to increase the number of foster carers recruited.

Key Stats

869 looked after children.

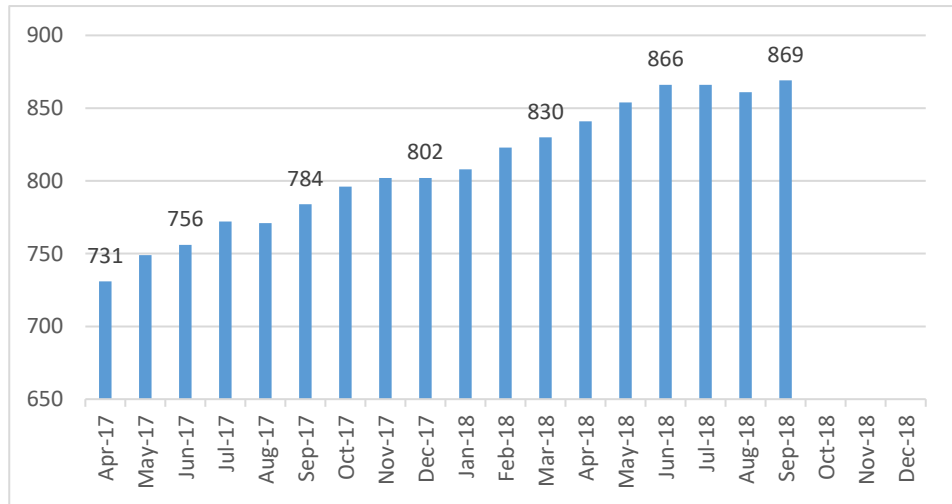
138 starts of being looked after year to date 30.09.18.

98 ends of being looked after this year to date 30.09.18.

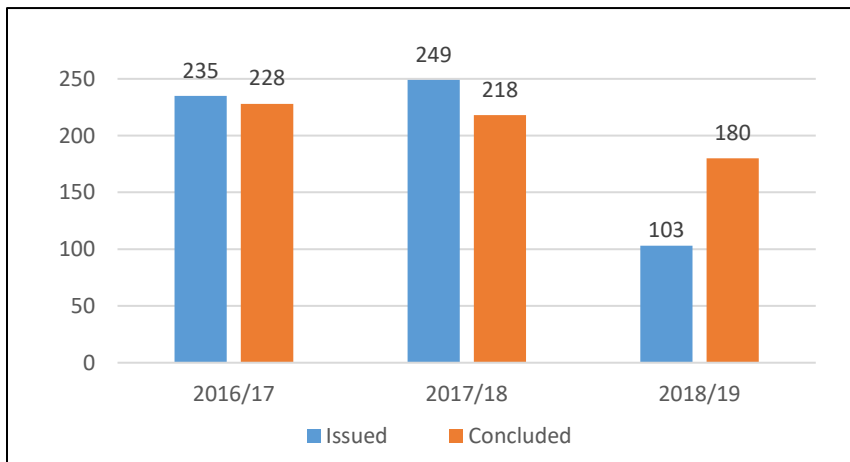
381 (57.6%) placed in Cardiff in regulated placements within county or neighbouring counties.

100% of looked after children allocated to a social worker.

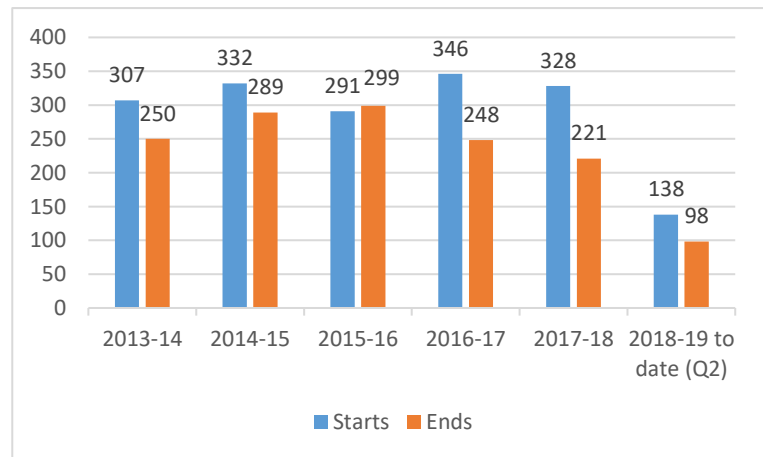
Number of looked after children



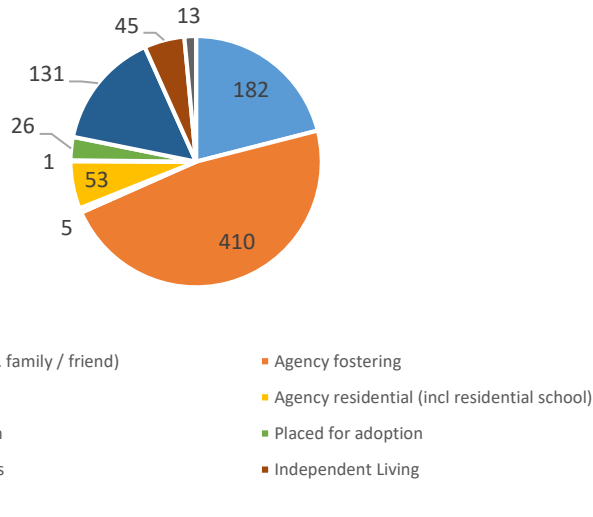
Care Proceedings so far this year



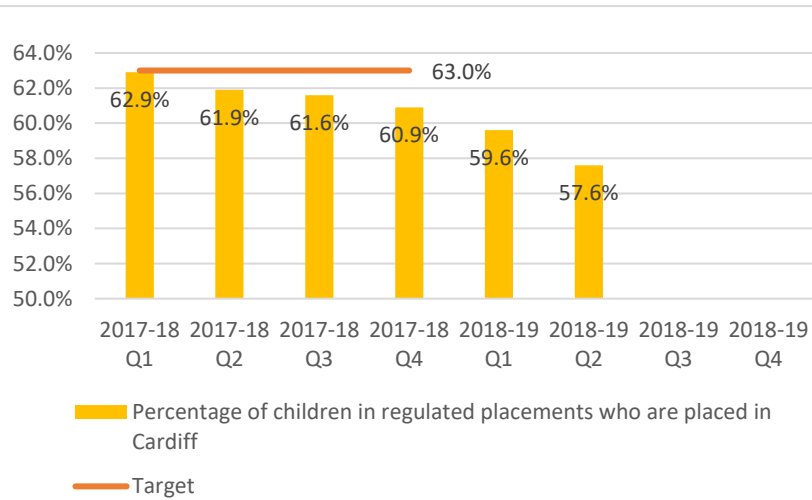
Starts and ends of being looked after



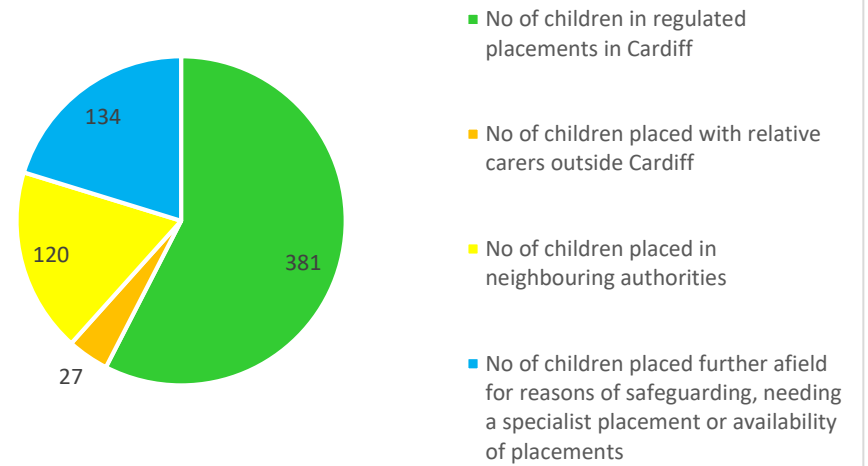
Breakdown of placements



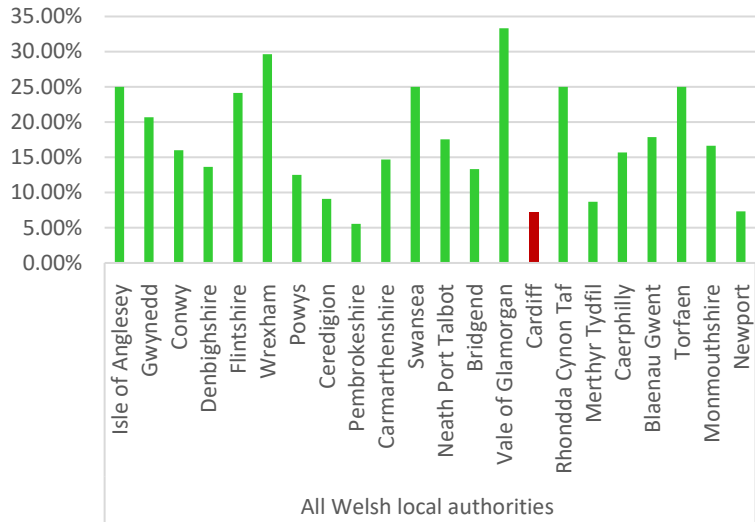
Percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff



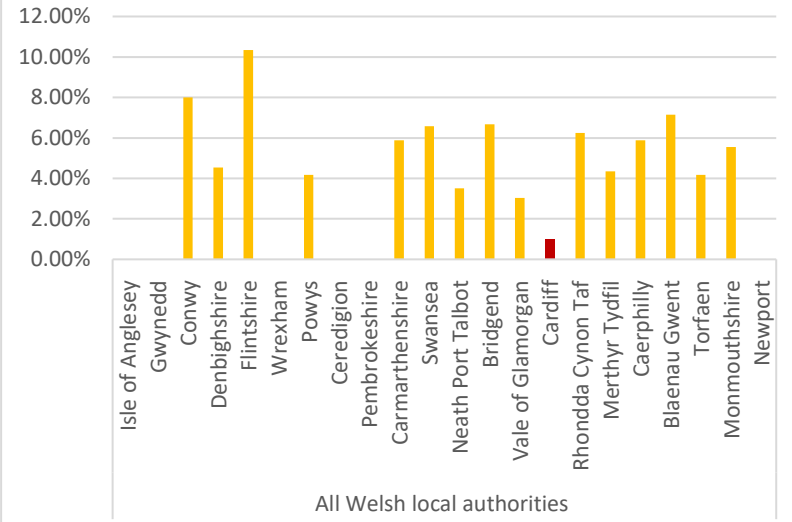
Breakdown of all children in regulated placements



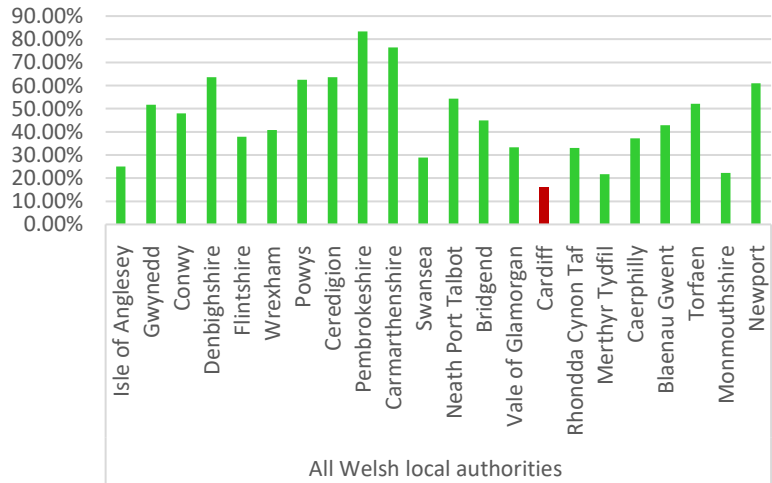
Foster placement with relative or friend inside Local Authority



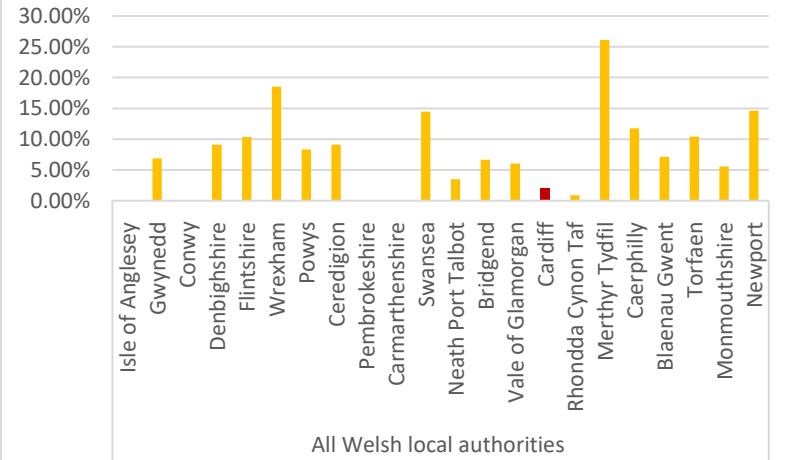
Foster placement with relative or friend outside Local Authority



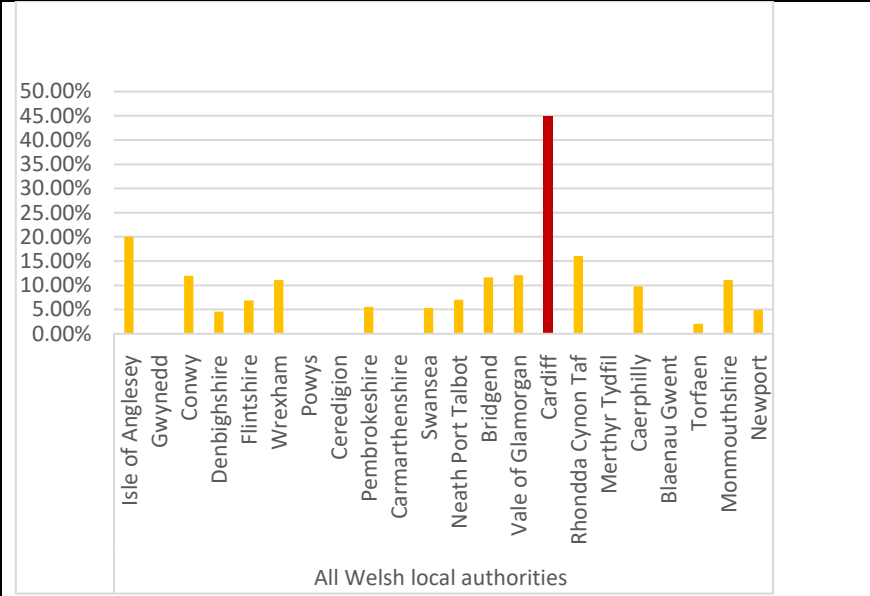
Foster placement in house foster carer inside Local Authority



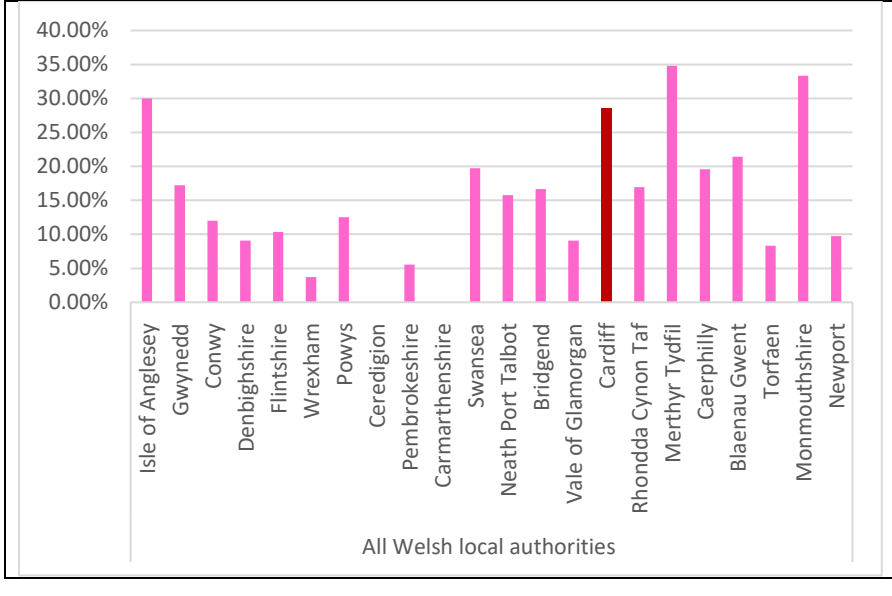
Foster placement in house foster carer outside Local Authority



Foster placement with agency foster carer inside Local Authority



Foster placement with agency foster carer outside Local Authority



Management, People, Resources System and Processes – Workforce

Tudalen 137

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of agency social workers to permanent positions. • Promotion of social workers • Some teams in specialist services enjoy good levels of retention and a stable working environment. <p>Sickness levels have not exceeded the acceptable level agreed and positive sickness management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of Social Work Vacancies = 54.3 as at end of quarter 2. 31.2% against a target of 18% • The number of Agency Social Workers = 45. • There is an overspend (month 4) of £54,000 in relation to Social Work Teams, reflecting the high levels of agency staff. • Lack of exit interview data • Lack of supervision data • Our ability to maintain manageable Social Worker caseloads must be sustained by improving recruitment and ensuring cases are appropriately “stepped down”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop and support the workforce by : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implementing the Recruitment and Retention strategy – Improving Marketing – Reviewing ‘the offer’ – Developing relationships with Universities – Improving data collection

Key stats

165.4 vacancies / 529.8 posts over the quarter = 31.2% vacancy rate.

As at the end of quarter 2:

123.5 Social Worker posts filled.

54.3 vacancies.

During quarter 2:

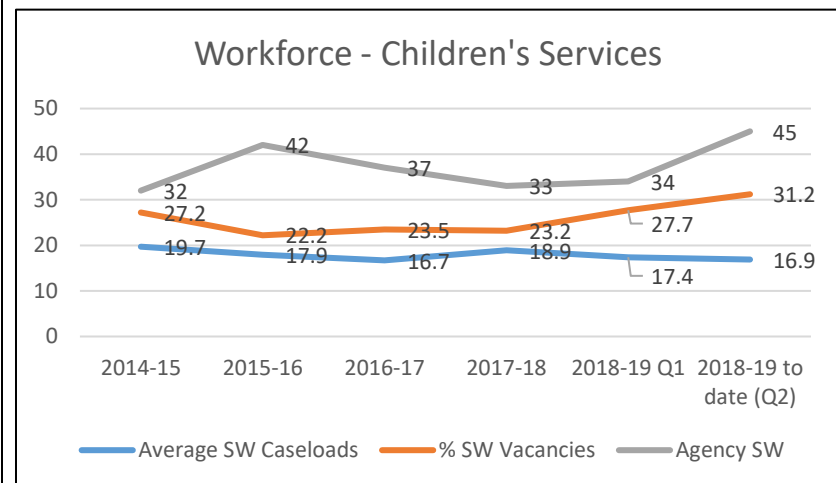
19 posts filled.

10 new Social Workers recruited.

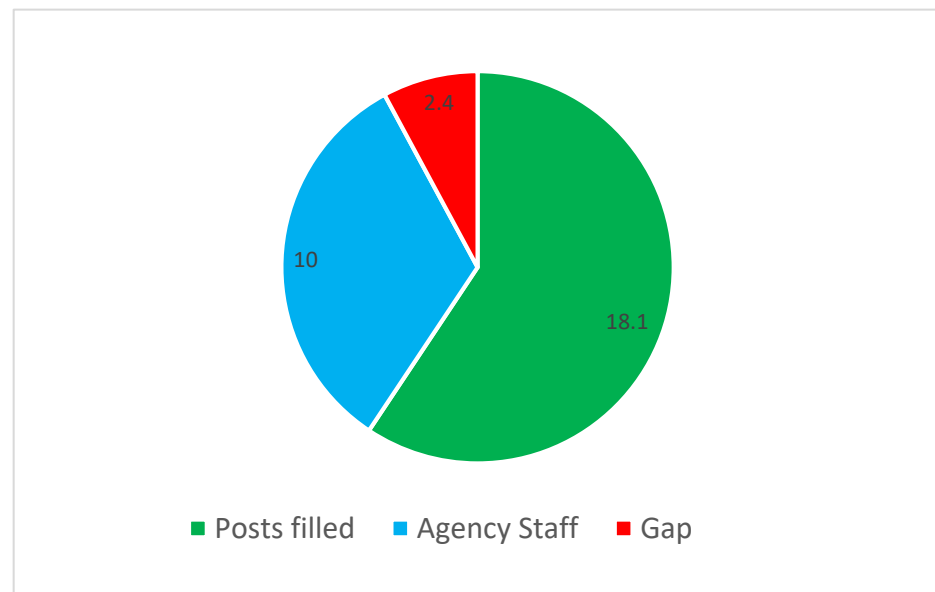
7 promoted, 2 transferred.

Average caseload 16.9 cases. Max = 33. Min = 7.

Social Work vacancies and agency numbers



Intake & Assessment Social Worker vacancy position
Average Social Worker caseload is 19.4 cases

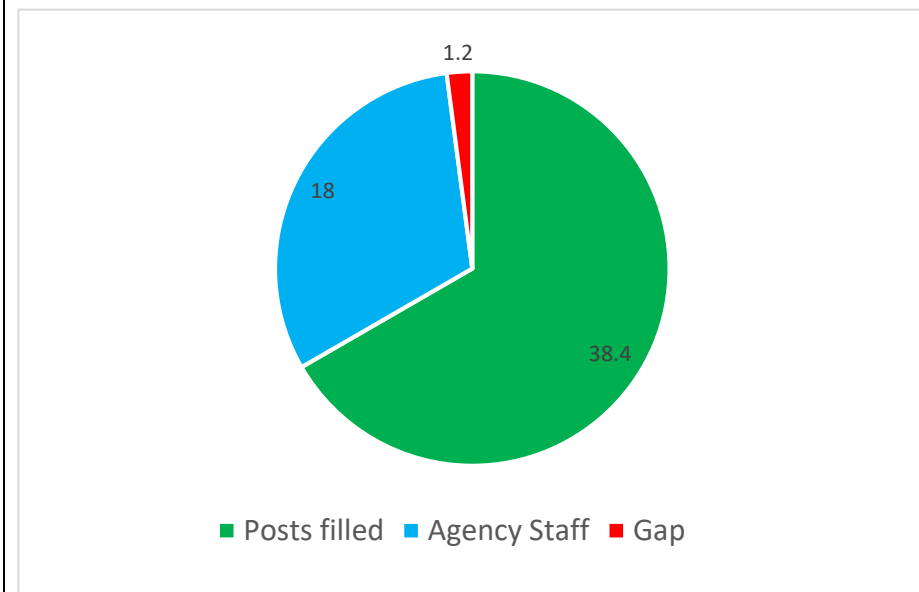


	Establishment	Posts filled	Vacancies	Agency Staff	Gap
I&A	30.5	18.1	12.4	10	2.4

Average caseload	Maximum caseload	Minimum caseload
19.4	33	7

Of the 12.4 vacancies, 1 is awaiting a start date, 6 are in the targeted services restructure - on hold, 1 had unsuccessful interview - on hold, 1 being readvertised, 1 not in current recruitment file and 2 are new vacancies.

CIN 1 – CIN 6 Social Worker vacancy position
Average Social Worker caseload is 13.7 cases

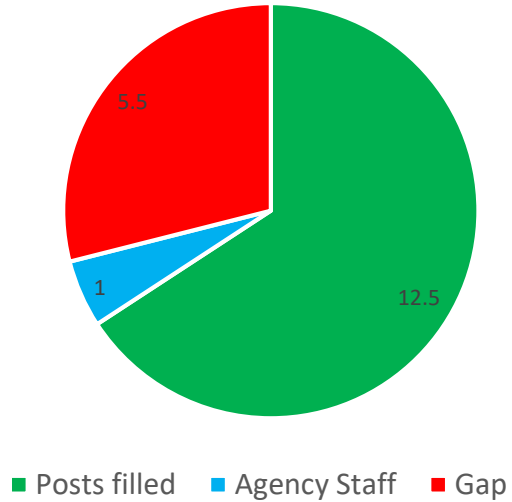


	Establishment	Posts filled	Vacancies	Agency Staff	Gap
CIN 1-CIN 6 including 13+ team	57.6	38.4	19.2	18	1.2

Average caseload	Maximum caseload	Minimum caseload
13.7	21	5

Of the 19.2 vacancies, 3 appointments have been made and are with HR, 2 at offer stage of recruitment, 1 with HR awaiting reference, 3 in restructure, 7 being readvertised, 2 became vacant in quarter, 1 being transferred to another team.

CIN 7 & CIN 8 Social Worker vacancy position
Average Social Worker caseload is 15.6 cases

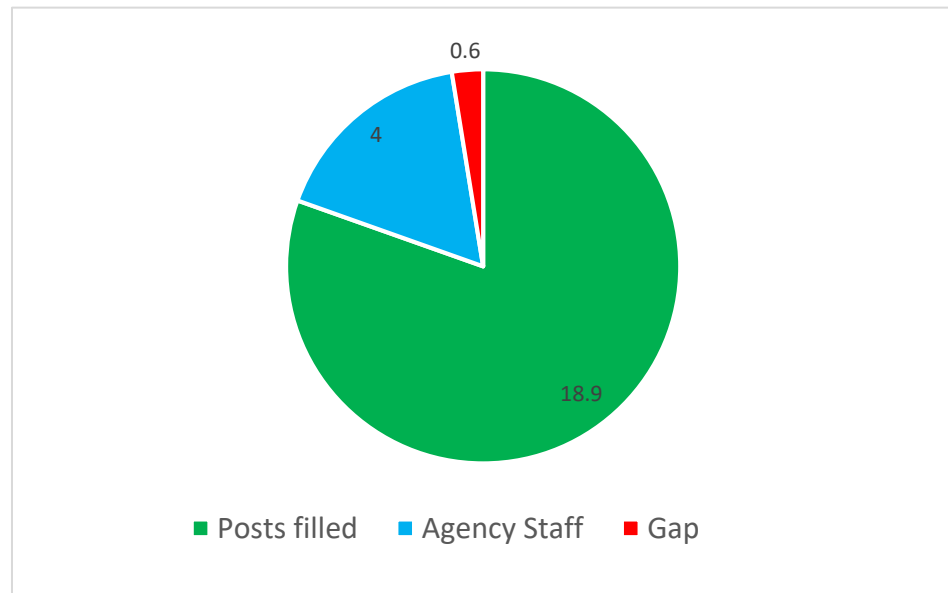


	Establishment	Posts filled	Vacancies	Agency Staff	Gap
CIN 7 & CIN 8	19	12.5	6.5	1	5.5

Average caseload	Maximum caseload	Minimum caseload
15.6	22	7

Of the 6.5 Vacancies, 1 is with HR awaiting a reference, 1.5 posts are in the restructure so on hold, 1 unsuccessful recruitment, 3 recently created vacancies.

LAC 0-14 Social Worker vacancy position
Average Social Worker caseload is 18.6 cases

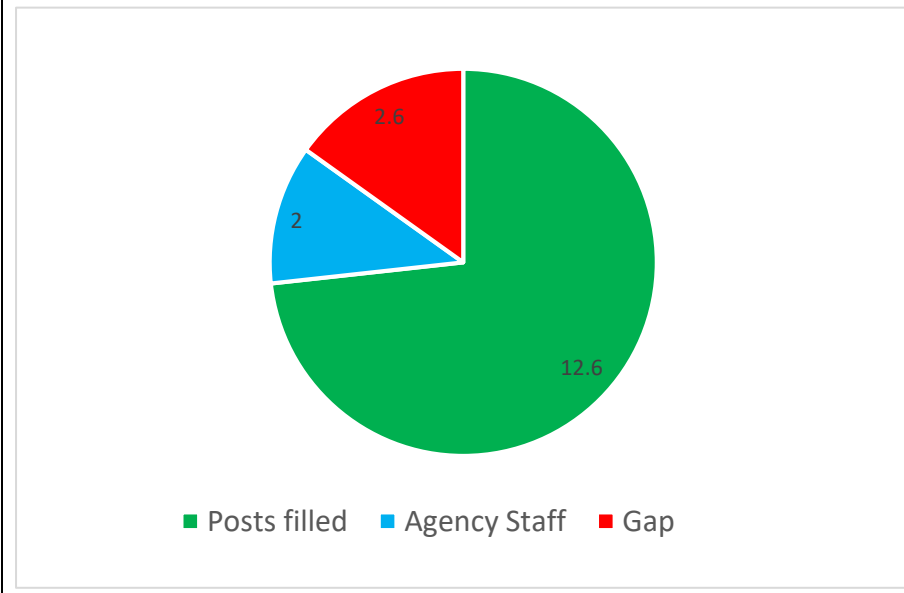


	Establishment	Posts filled	Vacancies	Agency Staff	Gap
LAC 0-14	23.5	18.9	4.6	4	0.6

Average caseload	Maximum caseload	Minimum caseload
18.6	27	6

Of the 4.6 vacancies, 2 are awaiting start dates, 1 recruitment in progress, 2 are being evaluated.

LAC 14+ Social Worker vacancy position
Average Social Worker caseload is 18.2 cases



	Establishment	Posts filled	Vacancies	Agency Staff	Gap
LAC 14+	17.2	12.6	4.6	2	2.6

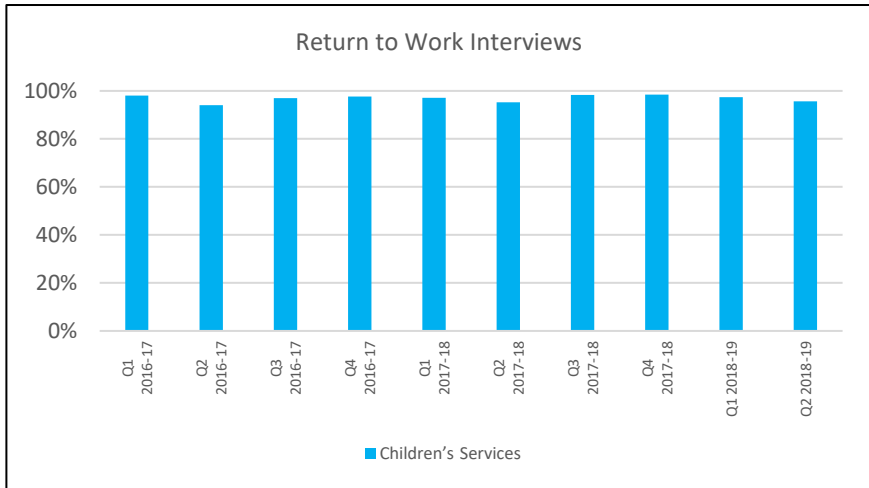
Average caseload	Maximum caseload	Minimum caseload
18.2	20	14

Of the 4.6 vacancies, 1 appointed case is with recruitment, 3 interview dates are being scheduled, 1 vacancy created in September.

Sickness

Tudalen 142

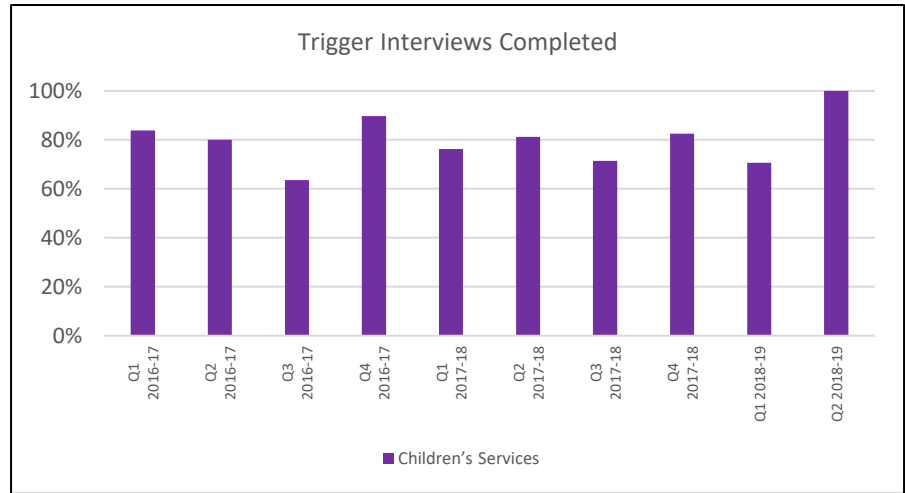
Return to work interviews



As at quarter 2, 44 /46 return to work interviews held, 2 pending.

FTE Target = 13	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19
Childrens Services Sickness FTE	2.66	5.24
Childrens Services Sickness FTE forecast	11.44	11.53

Trigger Interviews Completed



As at Quarter 2, 13 trigger interviews held. 0 missed, 0 not conducted, 0 pending.

**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD****CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

29 January 2019

**QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT
QUARTER 2 2018-19**

Reason for the Report

1. The Committee's terms of reference state that it will receive Children's Services Complaints reports.
2. This Quarter 2 report covers complaints and representations from 1st July 2018 to 30th September 2018.

Introduction

3. The current Welsh Government guidance and regulations in relation to social services complaints and representations came into being on 1st August 2014.
4. The procedure places the emphasis on the initial local resolution stage – Stage One - with complainants being offered a discussion to resolve the matter. The second formal stage (Stage Two) provides for independent investigation. If the outcome of Stage Two does not satisfy the complainant, s/he has recourse to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
5. Citizens making complaints have a right to be listened to properly and have their concerns resolved quickly and effectively. Children's Services emphasis is on listening to concerns and using this learning to improve services for everyone who uses them.
6. Complaints should be handled in such a way that the complainant is the focus, not the process, and that the particular circumstances of the complainant are taken into account (including their age or disability). Where the complaint relates to a looked after child, a child in need or a care leaver the local authority has a duty to provide an advocate as required. All children or young people who make complaints are offered a meeting and all children and families will receive a written response to the concerns they have raised.

7. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 devotes Part 10 to complaints and this reflects Welsh Government guidance and regulations and Council procedures. The Council is mindful that the Act will further promote people’s rights and collaborative working will be actively encouraged.

Summary of complaints activity during the period

8.

Item	Q2 2018/19
Number open at start of period	11
Number received (overall)	40
Number received directly from children and young people	3
Number closed	43
Number outstanding at end of period	8
% acknowledged within 2 working days	39/40 = 97.5%
% concluded within 15 working days of acknowledgement	33/40 = 82.5%

9. During this quarter, the number of complaints received by Children’s Services has seen a decrease in complaints to 40 (52 in Quarter 1, 2018-19).

- a. 47.5% (19) of the complaints received were in relation to the Social Worker or the service received. There were no complaints in relation to finance. 10% (4) of the complaints received were in relation to contact. The remaining 42.5% (17) of complaints were in relation to other issues including decision-making.
- b. 8 complaints were received about the Intake & Assessment Service, which remains the same as the 8 received in Quarter 1 (18/19) 18 complaints were received regarding the Child in Need Service (3 from young people) which compared with 22 in Quarter 1 (18/19); 11 complaints were received about the Looked After Children Service compared with 14 in Quarter 1 (18/19). In relation to Child Health & Disability Services there were 3 complaints, decreasing from 4 in Quarter 1 (18/19).

Examples of complaints concluded during the quarter are:

A complaint where we were able to put things right

A complaint received from an advocate on behalf of a young person, the young person is being cared for by relatives. The complaints officer met with the young person who informed her that they did not feel their Social worker was listening to their wishes and feelings. The young person wished to move because, in their view, the family didn't take them out for activities and didn't make individual time for them. The young person's school attendance was restricted due to behavioural difficulties, therefore the young person wasn't able to access the full curriculum at school. The Social Worker provided intensive support over a significant period, weekly meetings were held at the school who agreed to initiate ways in which the young person could be included in the full timetable. Support services were also accessed, for example a befriender was appointed and the young person attended Bright Sparks. These activities increased the young person's sense of self and ensured inclusion. Counselling was put in place for the young person to access.

A complaint where we had no case to answer

We received a complaint from the parent of a child who was living with another relative. The parent said that the Social Worker did not retain contact with her and provide regular updates about her child. The parent also stipulated that she wished to see her child prior to the child going to live abroad.

The care plan, indorsed by a Judge said that there should be one final contact with the child prior to the child leaving the UK. The Mother was informed that her child did not wish to have any form of contact with her before leaving. The Social Worker informed the parent that she would review this in sufficient time to arrange contact if the child was to change their mind.

Case recordings clearly indicated that the Social Worker had retained contact with the parent and provided her with up to date information about her child's wellbeing.

Stage 2 Independent Investigations

10. If complainants remain unsatisfied at the conclusion of the informal Stage 1, they are entitled to seek a formal Independent Investigation under Stage 2 of the procedure.

11. There was 1 Stage Two investigation in Quarter 1 (18/19) and this resolved during Quarter 2 (18/19).
12. There were 3 new Stage Two investigations initiated during Quarter 2 (18-19) which remained open at 30th September 2018.

Ombudsman Investigations

13. 14 AM / MP enquires were received by Children's Services during Quarter 2 (July to September 2018). 4 of the enquiries were regarding care / custody arrangements for children with the remainder being spread evenly across the Directorate and with no identifiable trend.

Learning from Complaints

14. Stage Two reports undertaken by Independent Investigators and reports from the Ombudsman include recommendations if required. In response, an Action Plan is initiated to ensure that the recommendations are implemented and lessons are learned.

Themes Emerging During the Quarter

15. Quarterly complaints reports are shared with managers so any emerging themes can be considered and actions can be taken to improve practice.

Update on Progress from Themes Identified in Previous Periods

16. The previously noted issue of social workers not returning calls continues to be the cause of, or an element of, complaints received. The strong message regarding the importance of returning calls continues to be reiterated by senior managers who follow up individual issues that are brought to their attention. The new agile / mobile working arrangements have provided social workers with more flexibility and the right kit to enable them to respond to messages in a more timely way and this will continue to be monitored to seek an improvement in this area. This remains an issue and continues to be monitored.

Early Resolution

17. Children's Services place an emphasis on resolving issues at the earliest possible opportunity, and where these concerns are dealt with immediately they are not opened as a formal complaint. On these occasions, the issues are brought to the attention of relevant Team or Operational Managers who acted promptly to address the issues raised to the satisfaction of the individual. During Quarter 2, 26 enquiries were recorded, all were resolved without the need to initiate a stage 1 complaint.
18. The low number of Stage Two investigations comparable to the total number of complaints received is a result of the proactive work that takes place to ensure that complainants are routinely offered initial meetings to conclude their complaint.

Review of Complaints in Social Services

19. The social services complaints team and the corporate complaints team are now co-located and work has taken place, a new case management system which has improved the complaints process. Additional, weekly monitoring reports are presented to the Director of Social Service's management team to monitor compliance and identify and address any emerging issues.

Summary of Compliments

20. There were 20 compliments received in Quarter 2, which is a decrease from 46 in Quarter 1 (18 /19) A breakdown of compliments by team is provided below, compliments during this quarter are evenly distributed between service areas. The compliments enable Children's Services to build upon positive work and can identify ways in which further improvements can be made.

Team	No. of Compliments
Targeted Services	7
Specialist Services	7
Other	6

Example of a compliment received during the quarter:

A Social Worker within the Targeted Services area received positive comments from HHX.

“The Child/ren have been fortunate in the SW who has been case responsible. Court had benefit thoughtful analysis and statements which indicate that she has a good understanding of the child/rens needs and the family’s complexities”

The Local Authorities evidence presented at court has been shared within teams as an example of best practice.

Summary for Quarter 2

21. As at the 30th September, the service were working with 2,643 (2,787 in Q4) children and young people and of these:

- a. In total, we received 40 complaints, of which, 11 (27.5%) related to Looked after Children. 3 (7.5%) were directly from the young person.
- b. In total, we received 20 compliments.

Responses to AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry Letters

22. 14 AM / MP enquires were received by Children’s Services during Quarter 2 (July to September 2018). 4 of the enquiries were regarding care / custody arrangements for children with the remainder being spread evenly across the Directorate and with no identifiable trend.

Individual Rights (Previously Subject Access Requests)

23. Individual Rights - Access is a request from an individual to see a copy of the information an organisation holds about them, or their children. These requests should be responded to within 30 calendar days of receipt. Erasure and Rectification requests can now be made and are dealt with in the same way. Some types of personal data are exempt from Individual Rights and so cannot be obtained by making such a request. On receipt of the request, work is undertaken to ensure that individuals are only provided with information that they are entitled to receive.

24. Children’s Services undertook the following activity in relation to Individual Rights in Quarter 1 2018-19:

- a. 3 requests were received, all were responded to on time and within the statutory time frame.
- b. We achieved 100% compliance (30 day deadline)

25. In addition to this, Children's Services received:

- a. 47 requests from the Police under the 2013 Protocol and Good Practice Model re: Disclosure of information in cases of alleged child abuse and linked criminal and care directions, a decrease from 57 in quarter 4 (17-18).
- b. 196 requests were processed in relation to access to requests from other Councils, Probation, Solicitors or Insurance, an increase from 142 in Quarter 4 and 83 in Quarter 3 (17-18).

Financial Implications

26. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Legal Implications

27. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

28. The Committee is recommended to:

- i. To endorse the report.

Deborah Driffield
Assistant Director Children's Services
23 January 2018

Yn rhinwedd paragraff (au) 12, 21 Rhan (nau) 4 a 5 o Atodlen 12A
o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972.

Mynediad Cyfyngedig i'r Ddogfen

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Yn rhinwedd paragraff (au) 12, 21 Rhan (nau) 4 a 5 o Atodlen 12A
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Mynediad Cyfyngedig i'r Ddogfen

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Work Programme update

Met with Kate Hustler & Ashley Lister to talk about LAC in the youth justice system. Talked about hearing more from her team at CPAC including statistics, regular reporting & a presentation, part of the Annual Report, part of the remit of the Committee. 20% of YP in the Youth Justice System are LAC. Talked about holding listening events for the committee – both YP & staff; attending education & training & linking with Gill James on inclusion. We also talked about being responsible as the corporate parent to check on how our YP Out of County in prison are being educated. We would like to visit Parc Prison & meet with staff & YP.

Visited St Teilo's School with Cllr Merry to learn about the provision they have made for supporting young people who are CLA. We met the team of staff who have responsibility for the provision which included the teacher-lead; and HLTA; a Support Worker; and an Advocate who is on placement from Childrens' Services. It was a delight to have met some of the children & hear first-hand what they felt about the support that they have. It was a very instructive meeting & it was clear that the strategy of close support & early intervention was working; children were remaining in education; crises were managed skilfully; and outcomes were being achieved – not just in terms of academic success & attendance was very good. Key to the success of the provision is:

- Keeping good records for each child;
- Doing in-depth reviews for the social workers;
- Providing support to those yp who are often behind academically;
- Respecting the child & getting to know them;
- Providing interesting activities via PDG;
- Using the medium of art & craft as a means of allowing the child space;
- Visiting primary schools prior to transition of the child to St Teilo's;
- Encouraging visits to the school for new starters.

I met with Christine Henderson from Cardiff University to discuss the GO Wales scheme that the University is running; the University were keen to make links with Cardiff Council. This scheme provides opportunities for young people aged 16-25, who meet certain criteria, to be given work experience & work placements. One of the eligible groups are young people who are CLA & still in education. I have made the introductions with Childrens' Services & hope that there will be some useful opportunities for our yp.

Met with the Head of the CSCC Siriol Burford, facilitated by Gill James. Another very instructive meeting during which we covered areas such as:

- Training for school staff & governors on CLA. Levels 1-3 being delivered – Level 1 is appropriate for governors & I have suggested to Cllr Merry that CPAC should be invited to undertake this training;
- Exclusions & how we could create a safe facility, modelled on St Teilos, to which CLA at risk of being excluded could attend. This could save a child from falling out of education; prevent the breakdown of a foster placement; and give the child time to be helped through a crisis. [This is with Cllr Merry at the moment]

- Use of PDG & how clusters are using the resources effectively. Querying if funds could be re-directed to support those schools where they face the bigger challenges;
- SIMS does not require CLA data to be entered. This needs to be taken up with Education as this data is vital;
- How we could replicate the mentoring scheme that Bridgend Council have in place for mentoring CLA by the University;

Visit to Rumney School was postponed before Christmas but this will be arranged for another date.

Visit to Hywel Dda planned for 5 February 2019.

Visit to Amelia Farm to be arranged once I have made contact with the manager.

Fenella Bowden
15 January 2019



Report of Director or Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within Children's Services (VCI Recommendation 41)

Matters to be considered	Visit details and outcomes	Additional Comments including any follow up action required or taken
Individual(s) visiting setting	Fenella Bowden	Visit with Cllr Sarah Merry
Author of report	Fenella Bowden	
Date of Visit	6.11.18	
Date of Report	6.11.18	
Date reported to CPAC		
Setting Visited	St Teilo's School	
General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers	I met with 4 members of staff at the school & introduced to the HT. We also met with a group of CLA of various ages. The purpose of our visit was to see for ourselves the work that the school is doing	.
Positive messages gathered from visit	I was impressed by the way in which staff & YP communicated with each other & the way in which difficult situations can be diffused using various strategies & collaborations. The outcomes for these YP are improving & the model that has been established at the school is one that could be used as a basis for further development in Cardiff schools. The YP that	

	we met were happy to talk about the school & how they have developed confidence.	
Concerning messages gathered from visit		
Were there any safeguarding concerns and if so what were they?	None that I could detect.	
Were there any concerns regarding the level of service being provided and if so what?	None	
Were there any other concerns?	None	

Copy to team, establishment, manager, worker, etc

Date:

Visitors Position and Signature

Date Sent to Manager of Setting:

Yn rhinwedd paragraff (au) 12, 21 Rhan (nau) 4 a 5 o Atodlen 12A
o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972.

Mynediad Cyfyngedig i'r Ddogfen

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol