



County Hall
Cardiff
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AGENDA

Committee	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and Time of Meeting	TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020, 4.30 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM 4 - COUNTY HALL
Membership	Councillor Bridgeman (Chair) Councillors Cunnah, Joyce, Melbourne, Naughton, Phillips, Rees, Singh and Taylor

		<i>Time approx.</i>
1	Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for absence.	4.30 pm
2	Declarations of Interest To be made at the start of the agenda item in question, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.	
3	SOP - Update Report - to follow To carry out pre-decision and policy review scrutiny prior to its consideration by Cabinet.	4.35 pm
4	Children's Services Quarter 3 Performance (Pages 3 - 42) To enable Members to review and assess the performance of Children's Services.	4.55 pm
5	Out of County Placements - Inquiry Report - Progress Briefing (Pages 43 - 64) To enable Members to review and assess the progress being made following the inquiries recommendations.	5.40 pm
6	Forward Work Programme (Pages 65 - 70)	

7 Way Forward

6.20 pm

To review the evidence and information gathered during consideration of each agenda item, agree Members comments, observations and concerns to be passed on to the relevant Cabinet Member by the Chair, and to note items for inclusion on the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

8 Urgent Items (if any)

9 Date of next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee is on Tuesday 12 May 2020 at 4.30 pm

Davina Fiore

Director Governance & Legal Services

Date: Wednesday, 4 March 2020

Contact: Mandy Farnham, 02920 872618, Mandy.Farnham@cardiff.gov.uk

**CYNGOR CAERDYDD
CARDIFF COUNCIL**

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 March 2020

Children's Service Quarter 3 Performance 2019/20

Reasons for the Report

1. The Director of Social Services will introduce and present the Quarter 3 performance report for Children's services. This report will enable the Committee to assess the progress being made in improving outcomes for children in need and children being looked after.

Background

2. The Committee undertakes a review of the performance of children's services on a quarterly basis. A new format of reporting was started last year following discussions with Director of Social Services, scrutiny officer and Members.

Issue – performance reporting

3. The ongoing development of the Cardiff Performance Management Framework has brought into line the monitoring and evaluation of progress against commitments set out in the Corporate Plan and the performance indicators set to assist in the understanding of the overall performance position of the Council. This range of performance data relating to Children's Services is contained in **Appendix A** to this report.
4. The performance report for the performance during quarter 3, October - December, attached at **Appendix A**, has been constructed to highlight areas which are working well, what the directorate is worried about and what the directorate needs to do in delivering the Strategic Directorate priorities, associated performance indicators, and commentaries

Scope of Scrutiny

5. The scope of the scrutiny of this report is for the Committee Members to review the information provided to the Committee and to provide any comments, concerns or recommendations to the Cabinet Member or Director of Social Services.

Way Forward

6. At the meeting Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children and Families), Claire Marchant (Director of Social Services) and Deborah Driffield, (Interim Assistant Director of Social Service Children's Services) will be in attendance to make a presentation and answer any questions Members may wish to ask.
7. Members may wish to review the information presented at the meeting and determine whether there are any comments, concerns or recommendations which they would like to pass on to the Cabinet Member or Director of Social Services.

Financial Implications

8. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. 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.

Legal Implications

9. 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.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to review the information provided in the report, appendix and at the meeting and provide any comments, concerns or recommendations to the Cabinet Member and Director of Social Services.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance and Legal Services

4 March 2020

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Children's Services Performance Report

Quarter 3 2019-20



Executive Summary

What's working well?

- The Cardiff and Vale **Regional Safeguarding Board Awards** evening was held in November. This was a successful event and the Adolescent Service won an award recognising the commitment of the staff in the service. The annual **Bright Sparks awards** were also held during the quarter and were once again a success, celebrating the achievements of our children who are looked after and care leavers.
- Approximately 120 of our children went to **Winter Wonderland** and the sheer joy was inspiring. In addition to this, young people from the Youth Offending Service made and sold **Christmas wreaths** and spent the proceeds on gifts for our care leavers.
- The **Adolescent Resource Centre** has been developed to provide a regional service and is now operating jointly with the Vale of Glamorgan. The soft launch will take place early in Quarter 4.

What are we worried about?

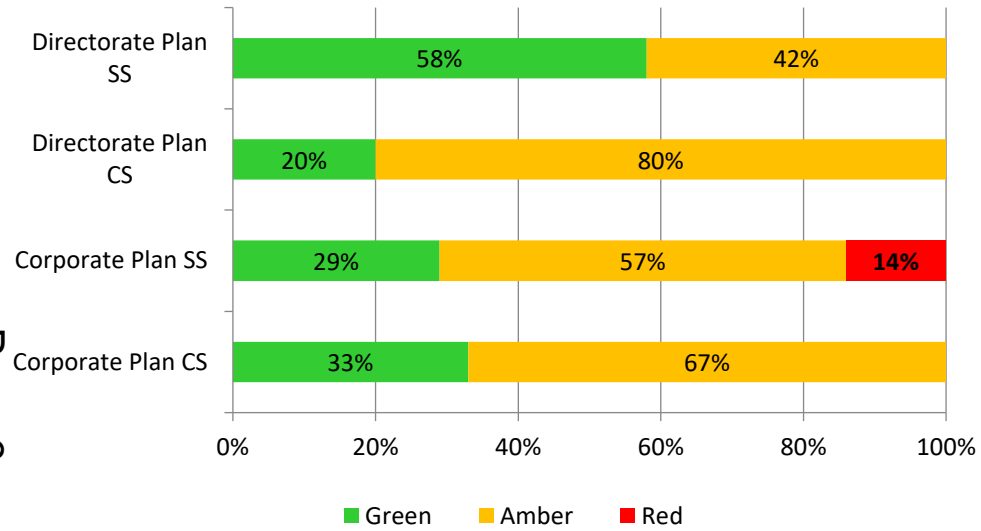
- **Performance in Children's Services** continues to be closely monitored and the number of children looked after continues to be a concern (972 at 31st December from 885 at the end of Quarter 3 2018-19). This does, however, include increasing numbers of children in kinship and family placements. A further area of concern is monitoring the timeliness of children looked after reviews and statutory visits, which have been affected in recent quarters by recording issues in the review team. However, focussed work has had an impact and improvement is anticipated by year end.
- **Children's Services workforce** – recruitment to vacant social worker posts is ongoing, but progress continues to be slow. The Children's Services vacancy position for the quarter is 32.9%, with on average 62 / 188 posts vacant during quarter 3.
- Resource to meet demand following the planned implementation of the **Extended Entitlement** of care leavers.

What do we need to do?

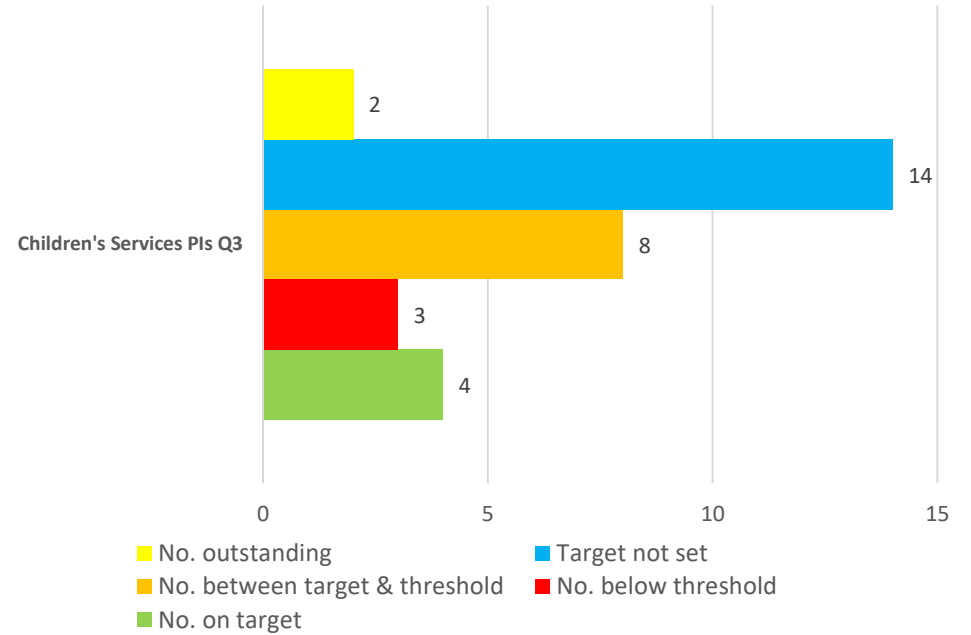
- **Key priority actions are underway in 4 key areas** – placements / fostering, accommodation and delivery of the assessment unit, practice and workforce.
 - **Fostering** – conversion of 31 currently ongoing full assessments to approved foster carers.
 - **Assessment unit** – delivery by October 2020.
 - **Practice** – quality assurance and performance in key areas.
 - **Children's Services workforce** – implement market supplement by April 2020 whilst longer term proposals are developed to retain social workers in Cardiff, through ensuring competitive rates of pay and ensuring that social workers are fully supported.
- **Extended Entitlement** of care leavers - work in relation to the proposal will take into account the existing structure and capacity of the service to meet the requirements of the proposed new duty.

Quarterly Performance

Quarter 3 Progress against Corporate Plan & Directorate Delivery Plan Actions



Performance Indicator Overview Quarter 3

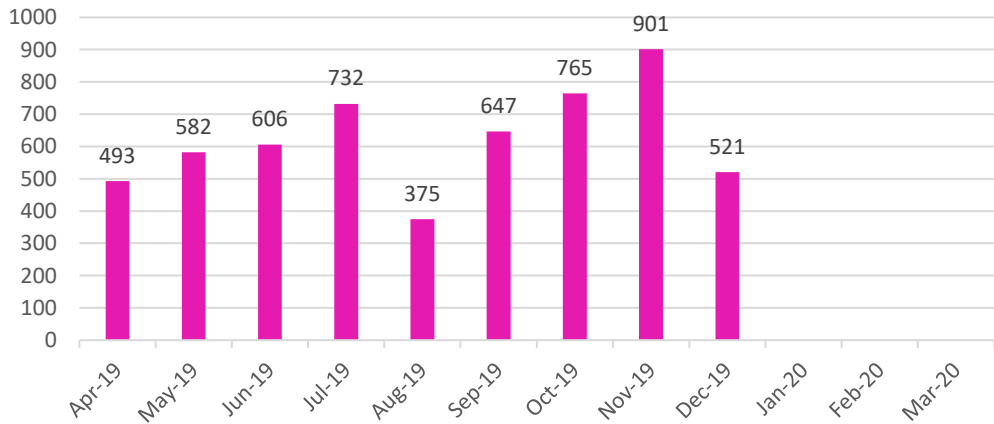


14 PIs with no target as not appropriate

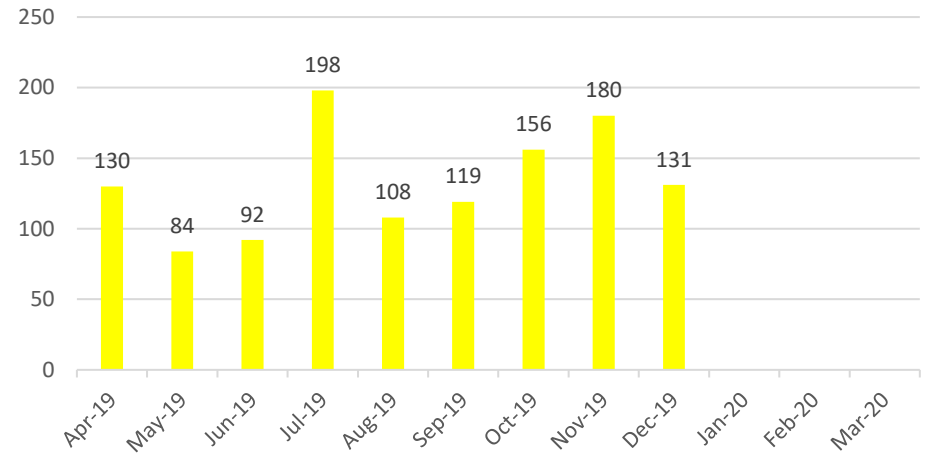
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Key Performance Indicators – Corporate Plan

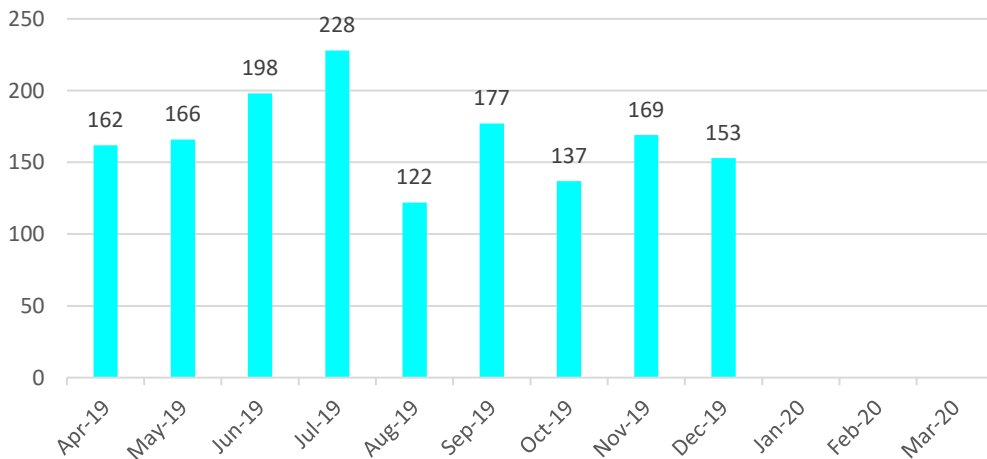
FAM KPI 01 The number of people supported through the Gateway



FAM KPI 02 The number of people supported by the Family Help Team



FAM KPI 03 The number of people supported by the Support4Families Team.

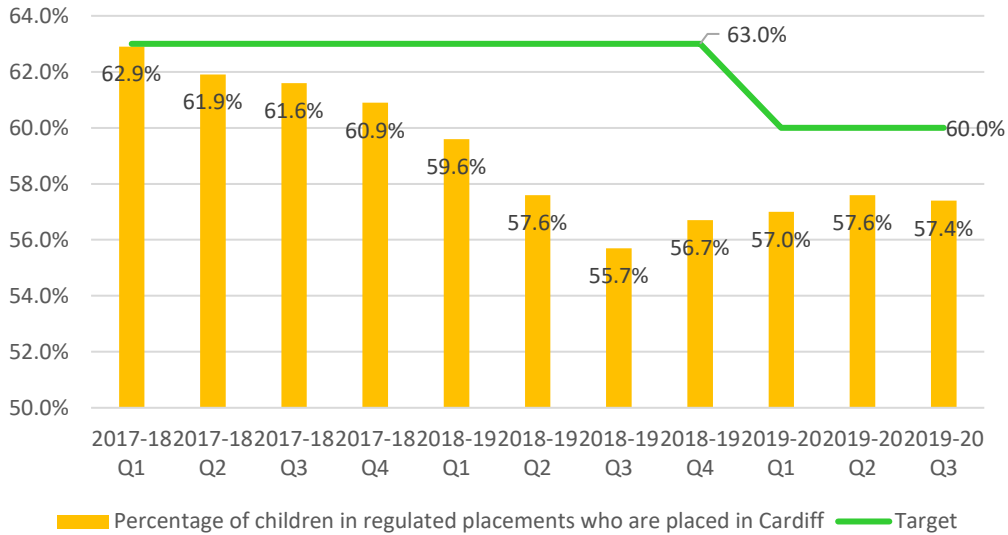


FAM KPI 01 The **number of people supported through the Family Gateway** = 2,187 = The number of enquiries and well-being contacts.

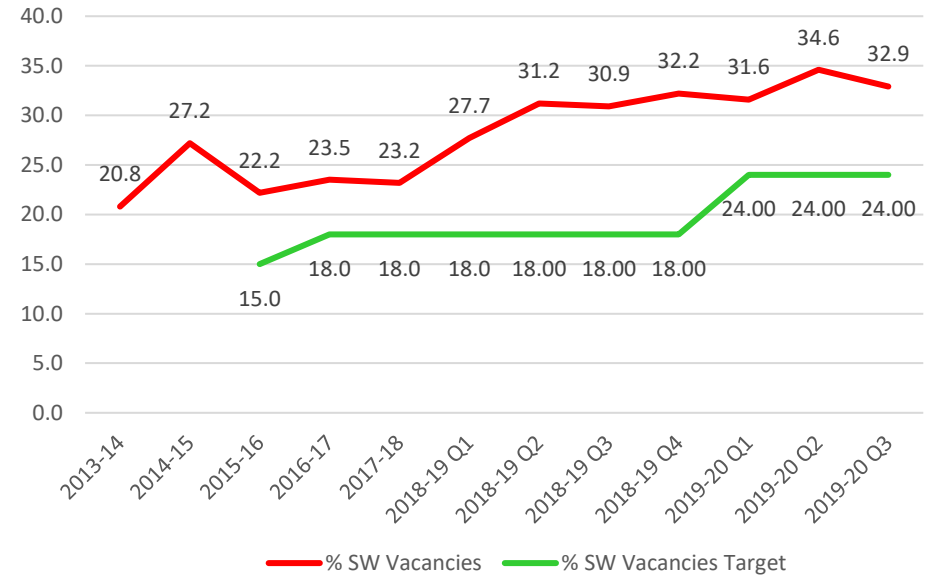
FAM KPI 02 The **number of people supported by the Family Help Team** = 467. Number of households = 219.

FAM KPI 03 The **number of people supported by the Support4Families Team** = 459.

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

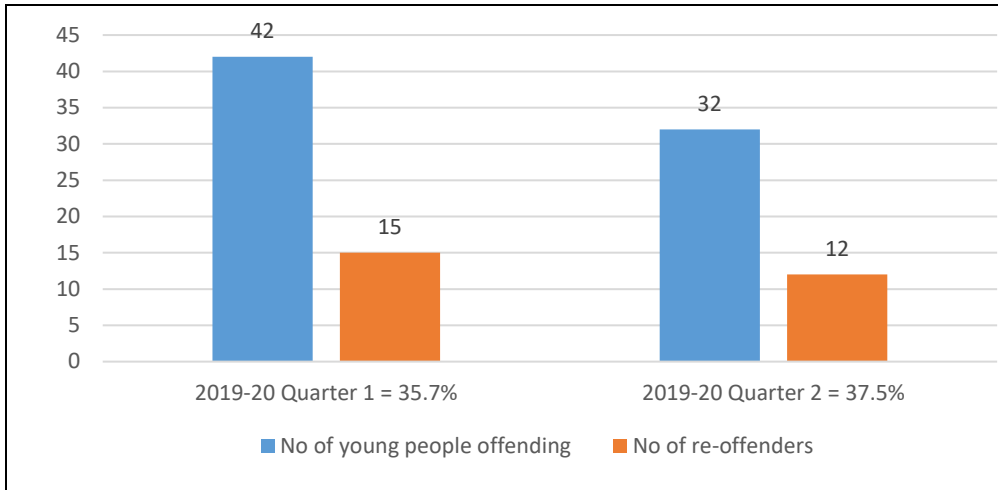


Staff 1 The percentage of social worker vacancies in all teams



YOS 2 The percentage of children re-offending within six months of their previous offence.

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CS LAC 58 The **percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff** = 57.4% (399 / 695). The PI counts only children placed within the LA boundaries and excludes children placed in neighbouring authorities close to their home area and attending Cardiff schools. Please see page 22 for a breakdown of placements.

Staff 1 = 32.9% **vacancy rate** for Quarter 3. For more detail, please see Workforce section on page 23.

YOS 2 The **percentage of children re-offending within six months of their previous offence** = 37.5% (12 / 32). Time lag in reporting Quarter 3 result due 31st March 2020. 12 / 32 young people re-offended committing a further 30 offences. Re-offenders committed an average 2.5 further offences. 83% of re-offenders have committed offences of less or the same seriousness and 50% re-offended within 3 months of the original sentence / outcome.

Prevention and Well-being / Independence

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What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full launch of the Gateway and Family Help Service took place in November. • Processes between the Gateway, Family Help and Support for Families have improved. • Support4Families have a full permanent team. • Social worker has been identified to specialise in completing assessments for young carers when requested to identify any support required. • Social worker from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub is available for advice and support to early help services on safeguarding matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tool to measure outcomes for families (distance travelled) is required to ensure that people receive the right support at the right time. • Need to ensure that Support4Families do not absorb cases which need to be referred to statutory Children's Services. • Young carers and parents may not have access to services they find helpful and may be reluctant to contact the Gateway. • Voice of the young person needs to be further embedded in the Youth Offending Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft framework developed – pending sign off from other agencies. • Complete case audits and review service improvements and delivery. • The formal launch of the Gateway provided families with advice on their services; the YMCA will support and advise parents and families about the Gateway. • Ensure we are systematically engaging young people in service design and development, ensuring the child's voice is as the heart of what we do.

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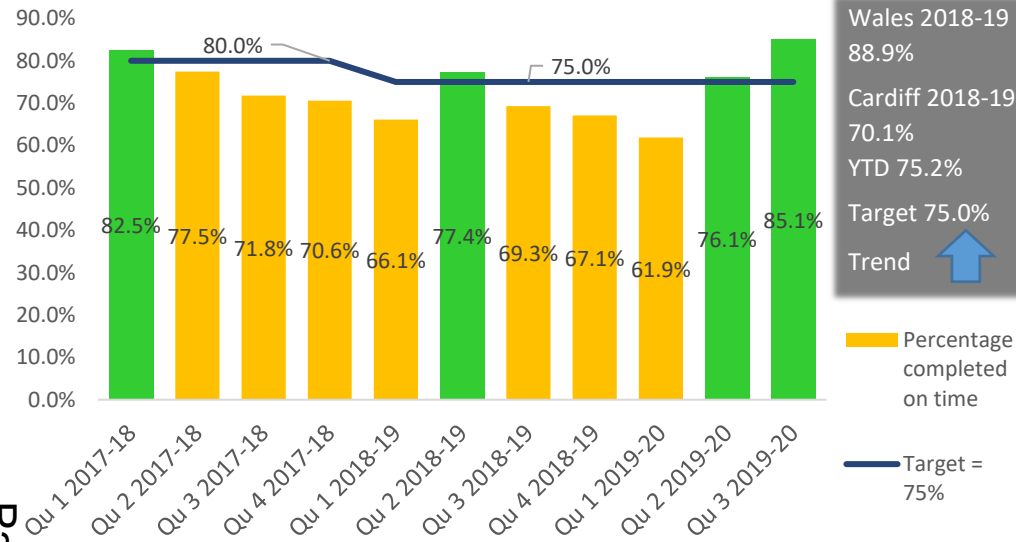
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with young carers is working well – e.g. work undertaken via the YMCA to inform the development of a co-produced service specification for a new service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a full set of procedures in the Youth Offending Services in line with the National Minimum Standards. • Gaps in partnership working in the Youth Offending Service. • Management capacity to drive forward key areas and emerging needs. • Need to engage families to offer holistic support and to engage parents as safeguarding partners. • Lack of Youth Offending Service presence in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure robust response to crime. • More work to do fully embed rights and participation in everything we do. • Delay in progressing development of Parent Participation Charter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is in progress. • Enhance partnership working - work closely with the Youth Service, Community Safety Partnership and the third sector to embed sharing intelligence and good practice. • Immediate appointment of additional interim management capacity and urgent review of permanent capacity required. • Deliver further work to engage parents as partners. • Consider placing a Youth Offending Service worker in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to identify cases at the front door and respond with appropriate provision. • Arrangements are in place for a survey to be developed to for care leavers, and to work co-productively with care leavers to effectively develop the service to meet their needs. • A session is being arranged to engage children and young people in the review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. • Implement the Mind Of My Own app which will give young people an instant and convenient way to express their views, wishes and feelings, and social workers a smart way to record them. • Implement next phase of locality working model.
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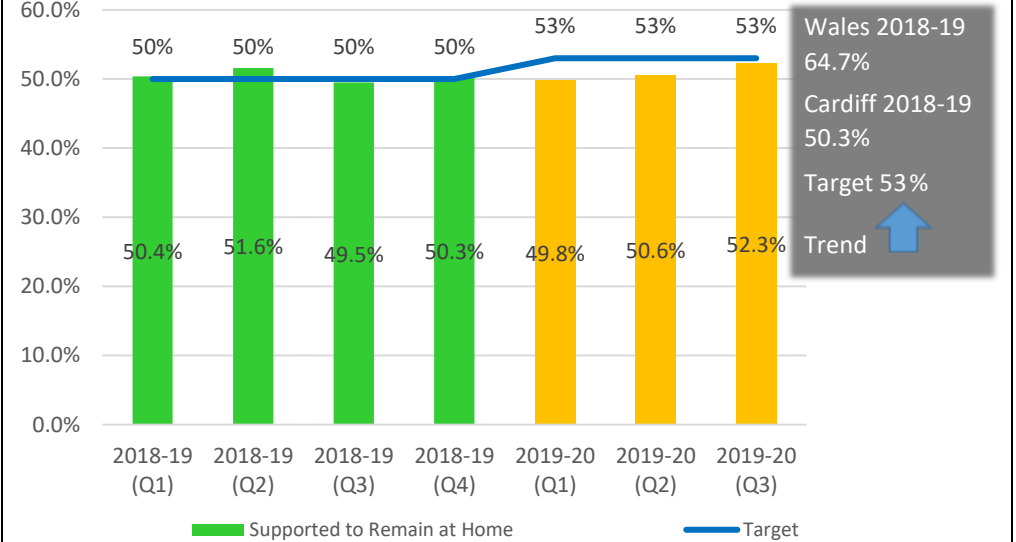
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work required to understand the impact of poverty on families.	
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SSWB 24 Percentage of Well-being assessments completed within statutory timescales



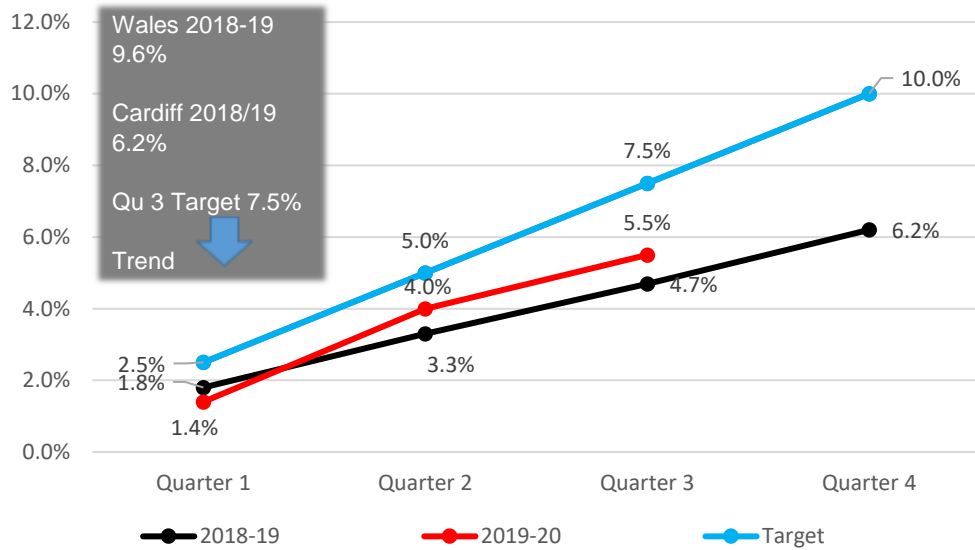
SSWB 25 Percentage of children supported to remain living within their family



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

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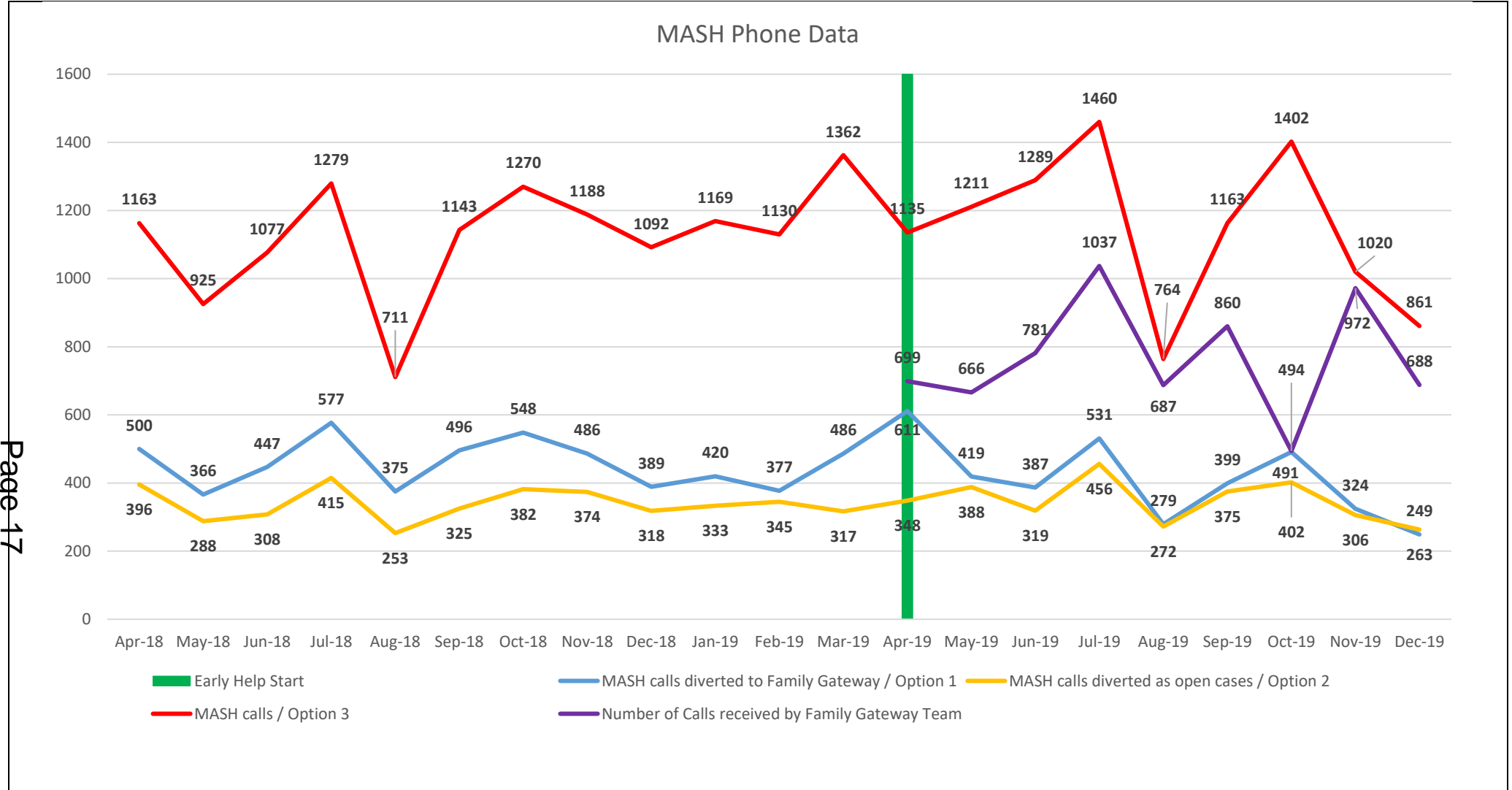
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SSWB 24 = $843 / 991 = 85.1\%$ of **well-being assessments were completed within statutory timescales** during Q3. Performance is above target despite a 5% increase in the number of assessments that were completed this quarter, 991 compared to 947 during Quarter 2. This is in the context of a 20% decrease in the number of contacts requiring a well-being assessment, 538 compared to 673 in Quarter 2. The number of well-being assessments that were incomplete at the end of Quarter 3 was 314, an increase of 6.4% from 295 at the end of quarter 2, however, only 34 were out of time compared with 98 in Quarter 2.

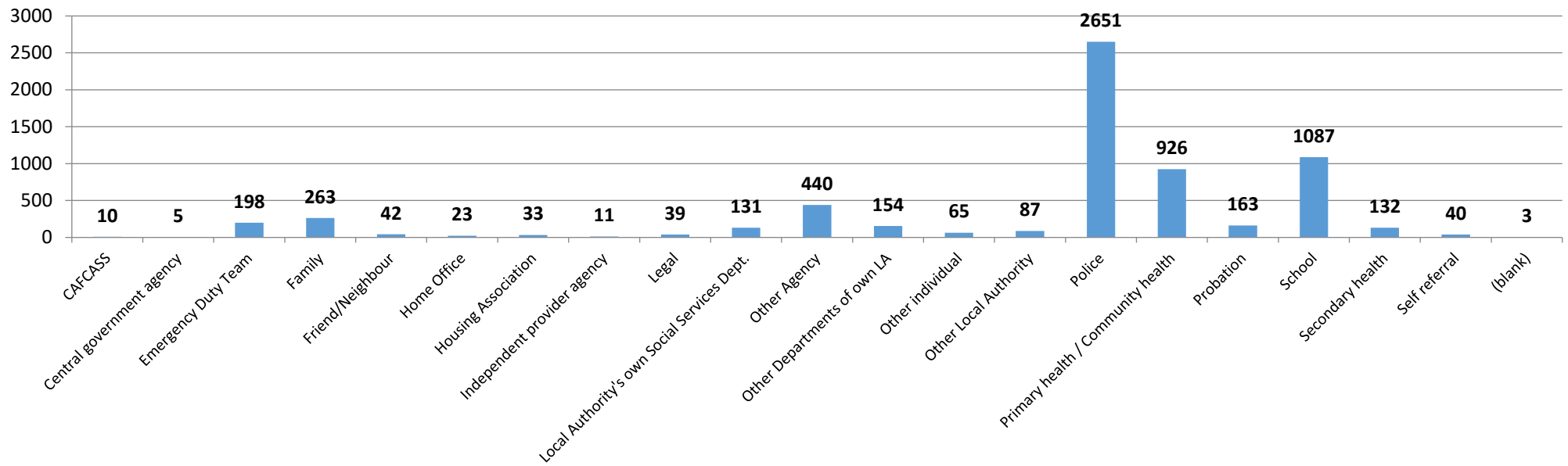
SSWB 25 = % of **children supported to remain living within their family** = $1,067 / 2,039$. Of the 2,039 children with a Care and Support Plan at 31st Dec 2019, 1,067 were being supported to live at home (i.e. were not being looked after).

SSWB 26 = 5.5% of **children looked after have returned home from care** during this year to date = $61 / 1,117$. Quarter 3 target = 7.5% Provisional result. Actual result will be populated from the Looked After Child Census. Of the 1,117 children who have been looked after during the year to date, 61 have returned home. This PI is cumulative, and performance will improve as we progress throughout the year. In addition to the 61 children who were returned home from care, 168 children were in the care of their parents, but remain subject to a Care Order, and 126 children were placed with relative carers. It is noted that our judiciary have indicated a reluctance to discharge Care Orders, and continue to make new Care Orders as opposed to other orders, e.g. Supervision Orders.



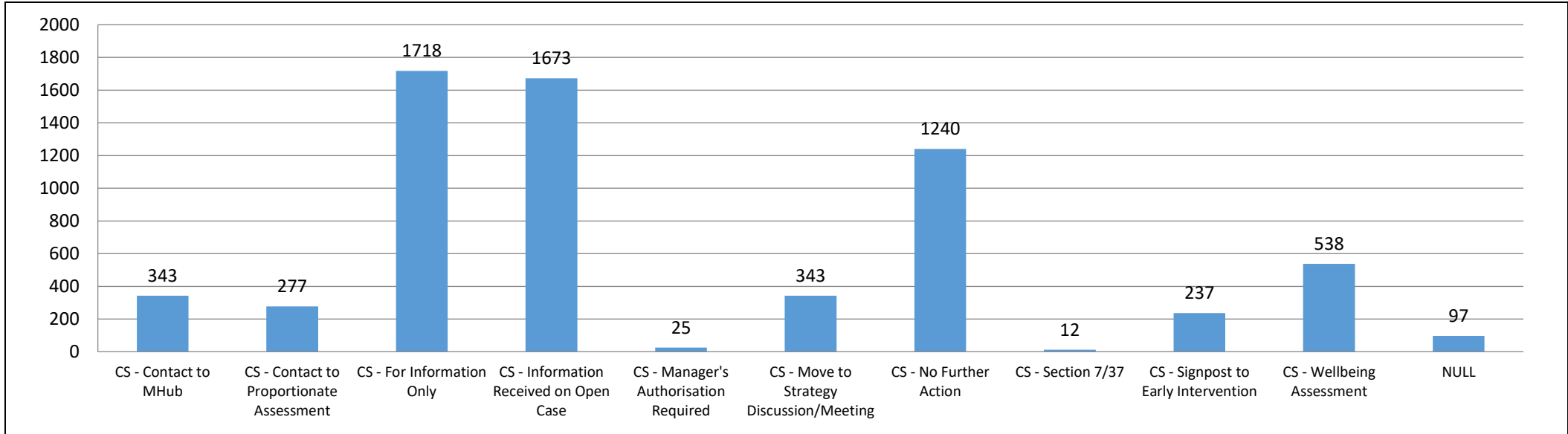
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Source of Well-being Contacts / Referrals during Quarter 3



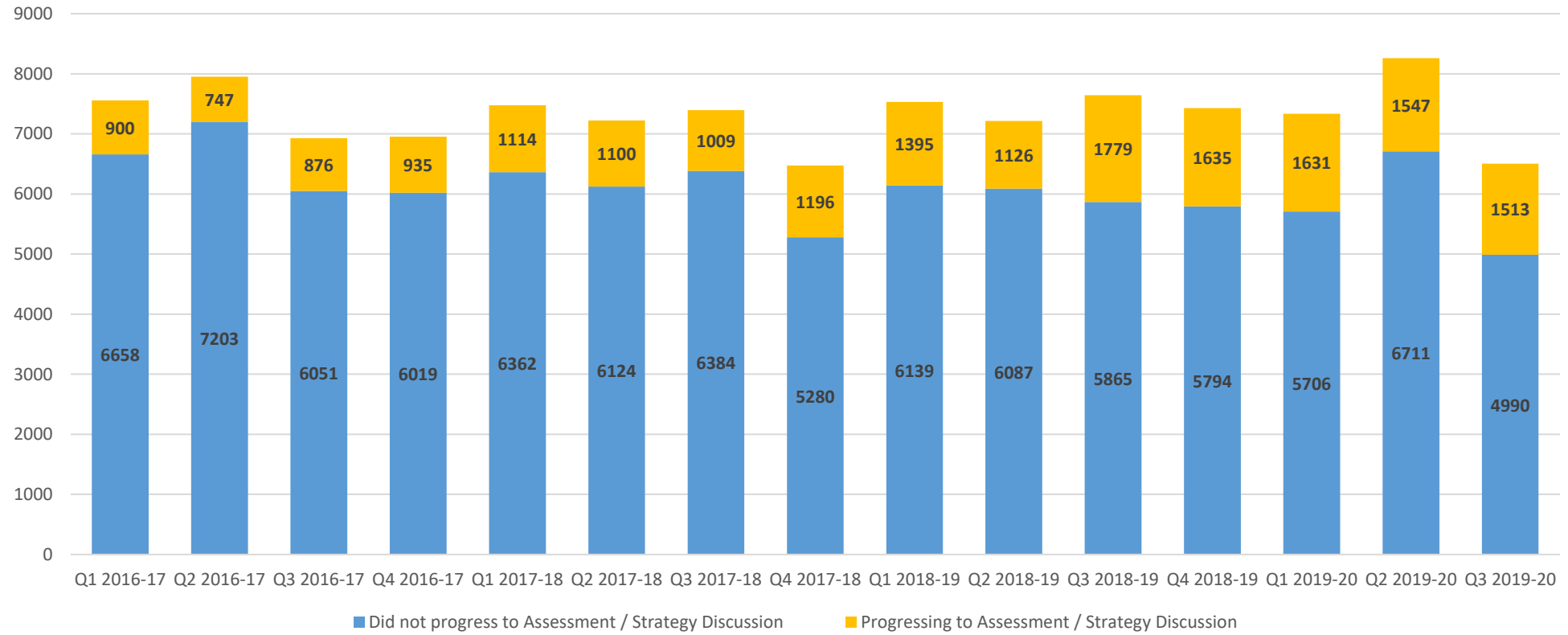
Outcome of Well-being Contacts / Referrals during Quarter 3

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During Quarter 3, 23.3% (1,513 / 6,503) of contacts have progressed to assessment / strategy discussion, compared to 18.7% (1,547 / 8,258) last quarter.

Assessment and outcome focused care planning / Care & Support – including Transition

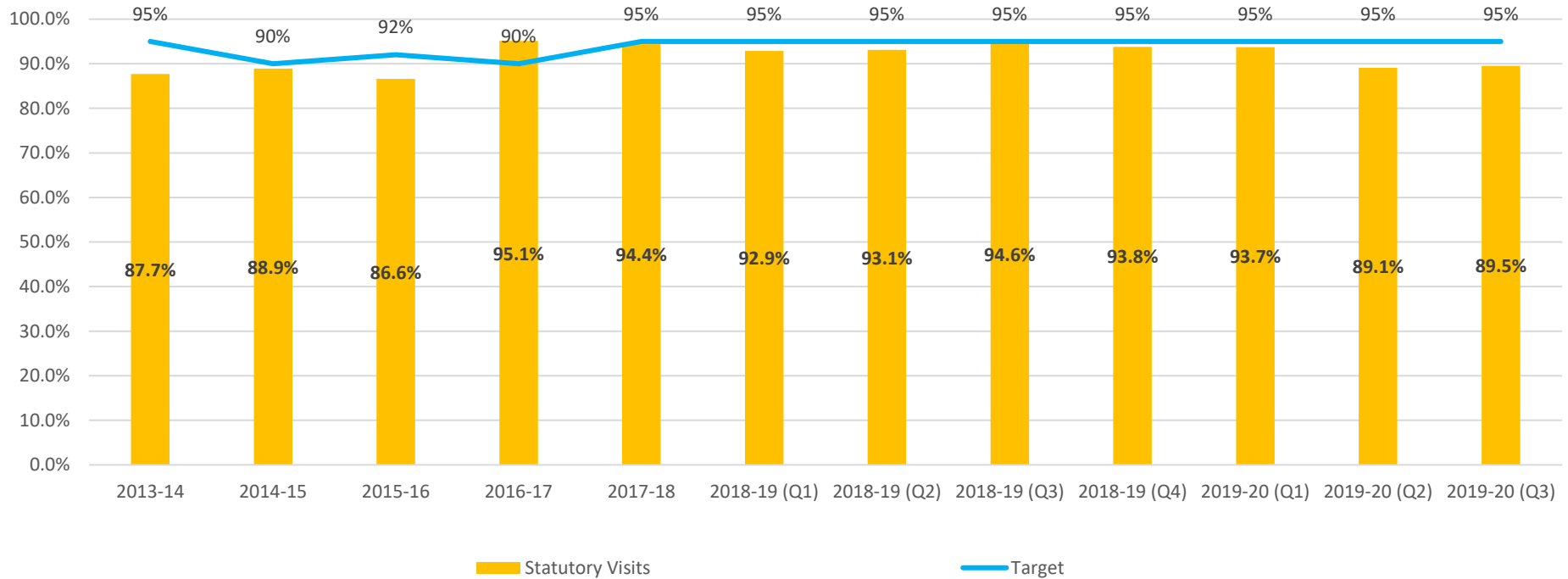
What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools to measure the effectiveness of Signs of Safety have been developed. • Regular briefings are held, and attended by colleagues from Health and Education. • Case reflection meetings are also held regularly are working well - champions are now holding these meetings within the teams. • Quality Assurance of CareFirst forms for use of Signs of Safety has commenced and a system will be developed to feedback to team managers to support them to instil confidence within their teams. • Performance in respect of timely completion of well-being assessments improved and exceeded target with 85.1% being completed within statutory timescales (target is 75%). • Regional Transition Protocol for young people with learning disabilities and Additional Learning Needs developed and ready for sign off. • Agreement reached regarding pilot of integrated processes for continuing care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a better understanding of the impact that Signs of Safety is having on families. • Delay in implementation of care planning protocol. • Need to ensure that the service is ready for the implementation of the regional Transition Protocol for young people with learning disabilities and Additional Learning Needs. • Regional Transition Protocol needs to be adapted to include all young people who are transitioning. • Joint Continuing Care Protocol cannot be finalised until Welsh Government guidance is published. • Need to develop a shared understanding of partnership working to manage transitions for children with mental health issues. • Electronic induction pack has been delayed due to issues with SharePoint • Improvement in completion of the backlog of children looked after review reports in the Independent Reviewing Officer Service in Quarter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop the reporting system to gather feedback about the impact of Signs of Safety on families. • Care planning protocol to be sign off early in Quarter 4. • Self assessment tool being developed. • Protocol to be adapted. • Awaiting publication of guidance. • Obtain Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services agreement to draft operational policy. • SharePoint is being set up for the Induction Pack and policies to accessible to all workers. • Maintain focused work to complete children looked after review reports.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnership working with Health colleagues and third sector organisations across both visual impairment and hearing impairment within Adult and Children’s Services is developing well.• An engagement event was attended by young people to determine the best way to engage young people in developing services to increase wellbeing and more effectively engage with parents, Education and Health when seeking to improve mental health services for children.	<p>3 needs to be maintained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to enhance services for children with disabilities and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ty Storrie is now working at pre-transfer capacity with plans to increase sessions. In addition work is underway with domiciliary care providers to expand the market for children’s sessional support.• This work has been completely aligned with the recommissioning of domiciliary care services for adults and it features as a discrete cohort of services within the recommissioning timetable.
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SCC/025 The percentage of statutory visits to children looked after due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations

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N.B. Data for 2019/20 is provisional

Key Stats	Percentage of well-being assessments completed within statutory timescales
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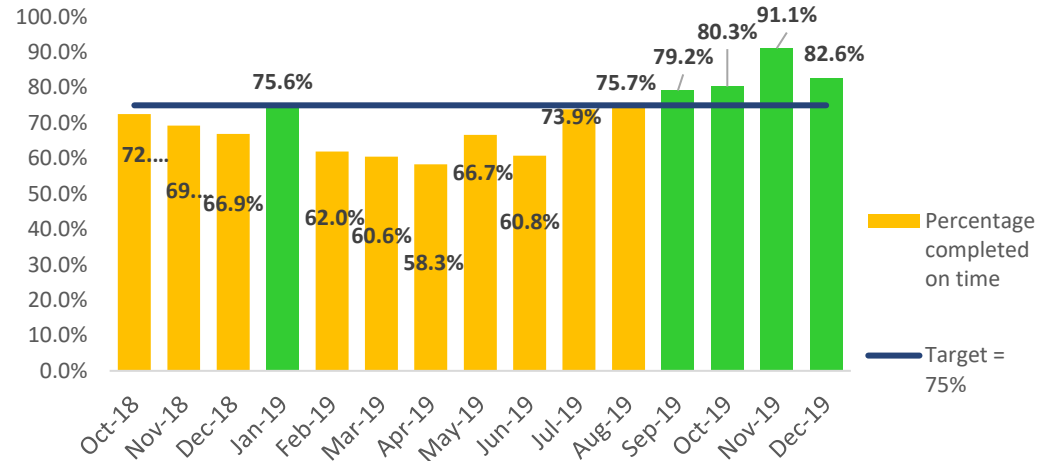
During Quarter 3, the percentage of well-being assessments completed within statutory timescales = 85.1% (843 / 991)

Target = 75%

The number of incomplete well-being assessments at end of Quarter 3 was 314, 34 of which were out of time.

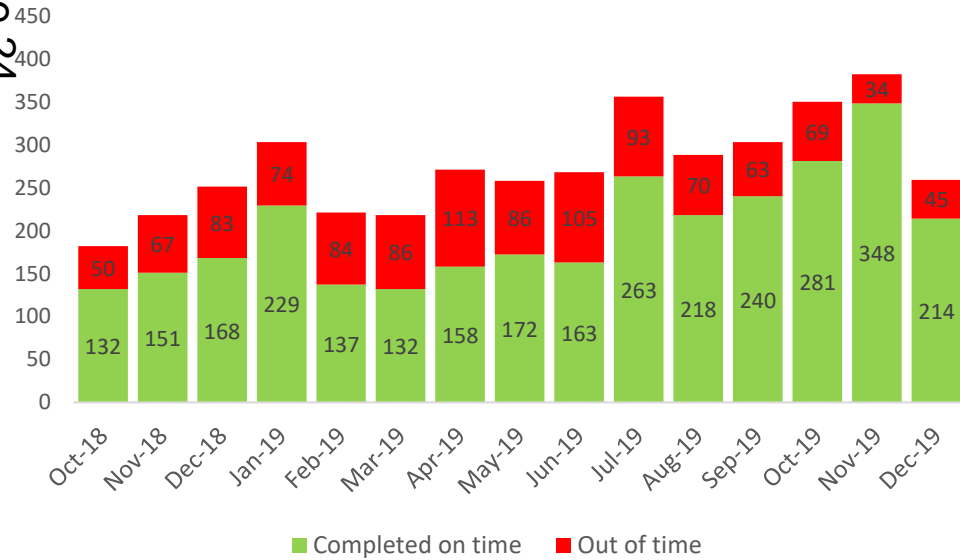
No. of children and young people in receipt of Direct Payments during Quarter 3 = 173

Number of children and young people working towards Direct Payments at Quarter 3 = 31.

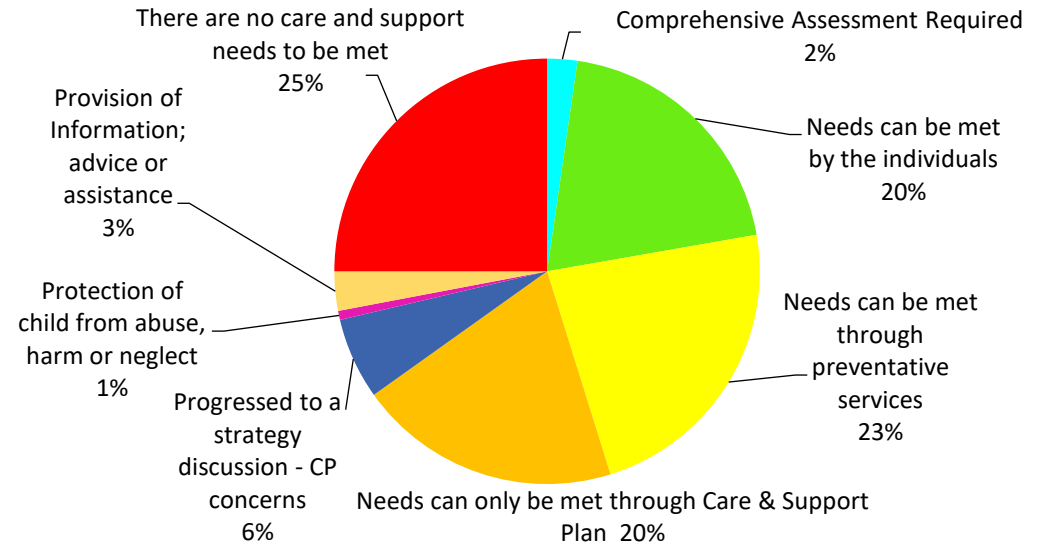


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Number of well-being assessments completed during the month



Well-being assessments completed by outcome during Quarter 3

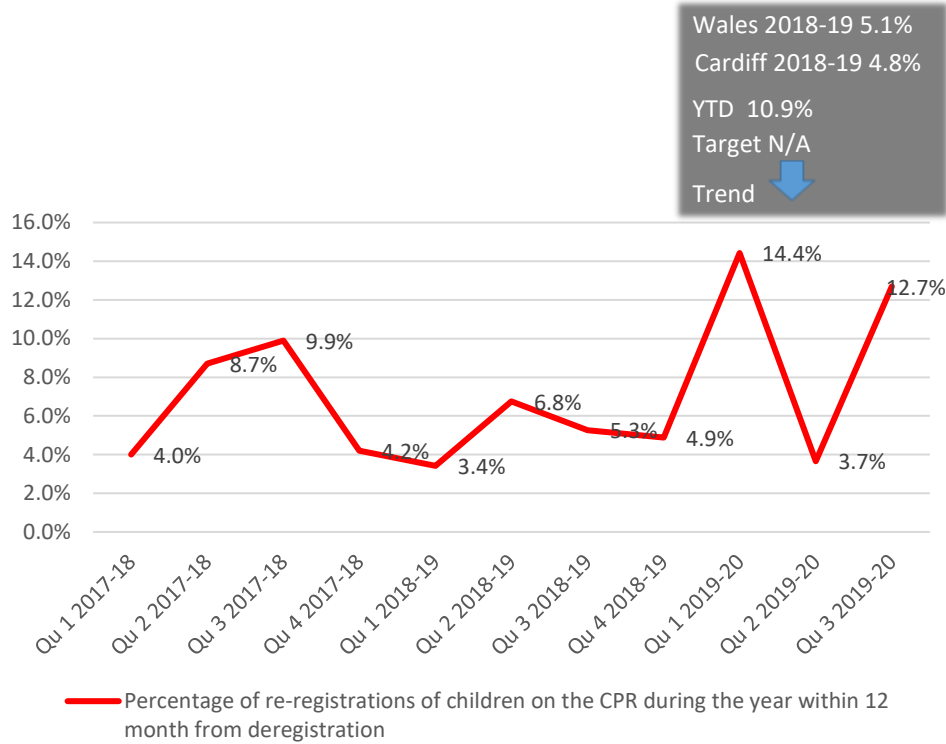


Safeguarding

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New 'Wales Safeguarding Procedures' launched in partnership with Welsh Government and Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Boards during National Safeguarding week in November. • Effective working partnership links with the Safeguarding Business Unit leading, e.g. National Safeguarding Week 2019. • New Operational Manager in post overseeing Support4Families, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and the Intake and Assessment teams. • Continued reduction in the number of overdue Section 47 enquiries. • The Exploitation Strategy has been approved by the Regional Safeguarding Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement and participation of community groups during National Safeguarding Week in November. • Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) model review needs to be completed and a new model implemented. • Need to ensure a clear multi-agency model of practice is in place for responding to all forms of exploitation. • Availability of reviewers and panel chairs to undertake Child Practice Reviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop links with community groups to ensure participation and engagement is strengthened. • Agree arrangements with partners (including IT system). • Implement the action plan arising from the Exploitation Strategy. • Embed a contextual safeguarding approach in order to effectively manage the risks associated with exploitation cases. • Develop a framework to ensure there is a pool of suitably trained and experienced reviewers and panel chairs.

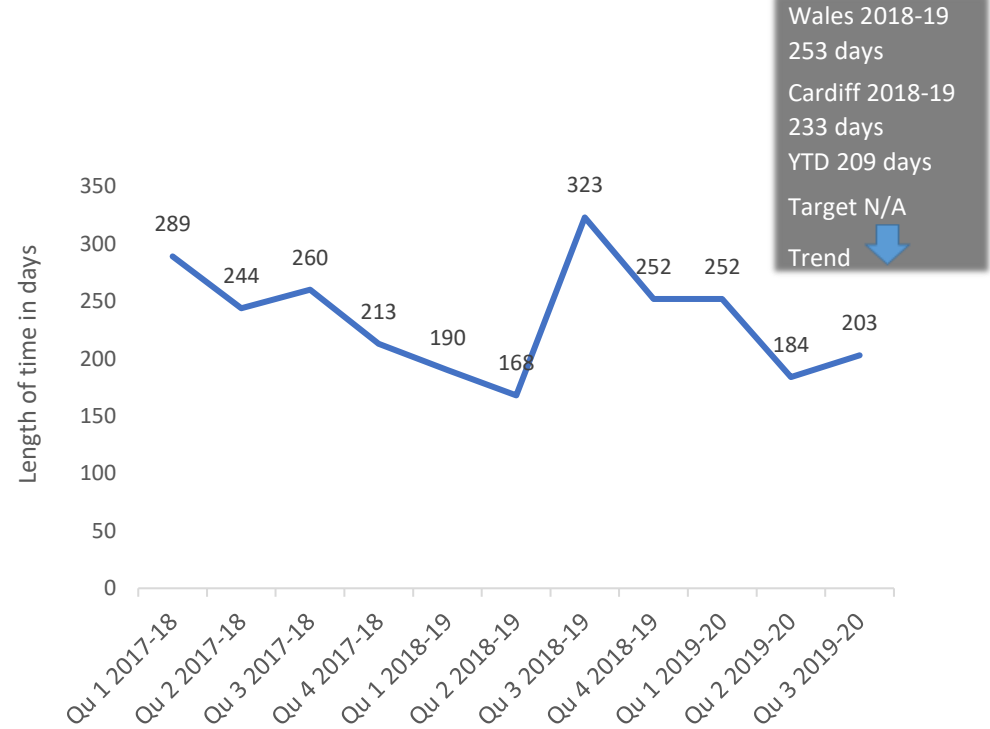
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SSWB 27 Percentage of re-registrations of children on Child Protection Register during the year and within 12 months from deregistration



16 / 126 = 12.7%. 16 of the 126 children registered during Quarter 3 had been on the CPR within the previous 12 months. Includes 1 sibling group of 6.

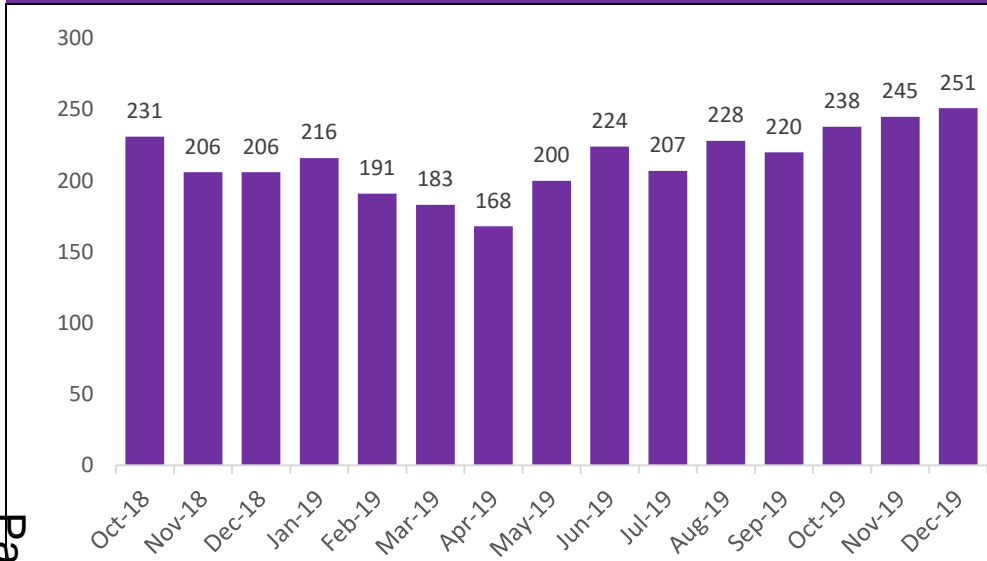
SSWB 28 Average length of time for all children who were on the Child Protection Register during the year.



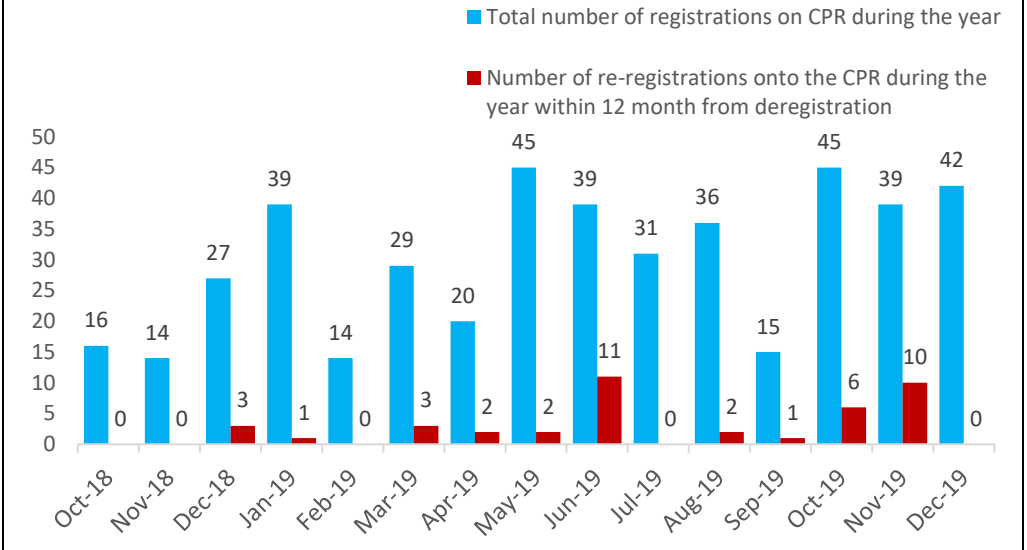
The average length of time on the CPR for the 95 children who were deregistered during Quarter 3 was 203 days.

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Number of children on the Child Protection Register



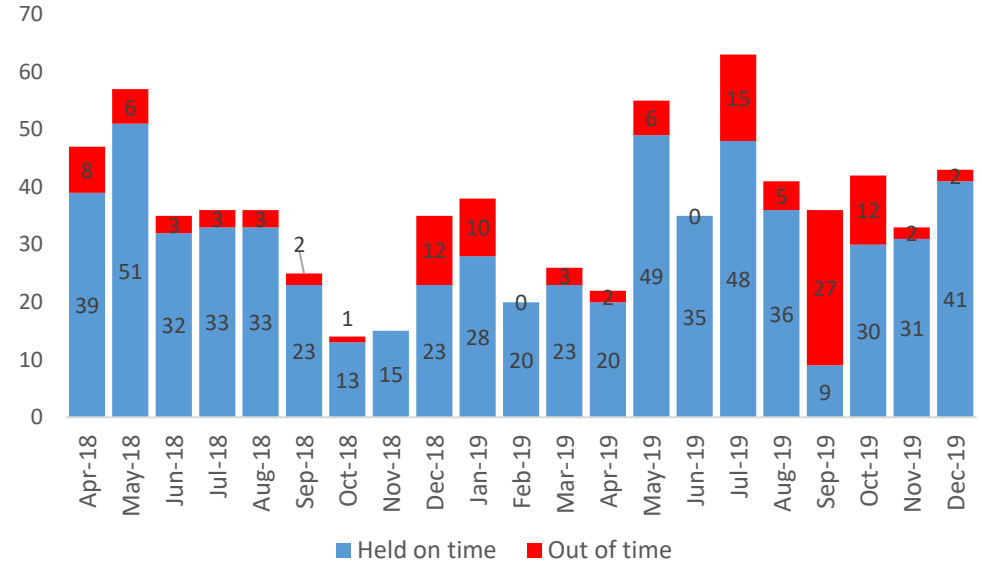
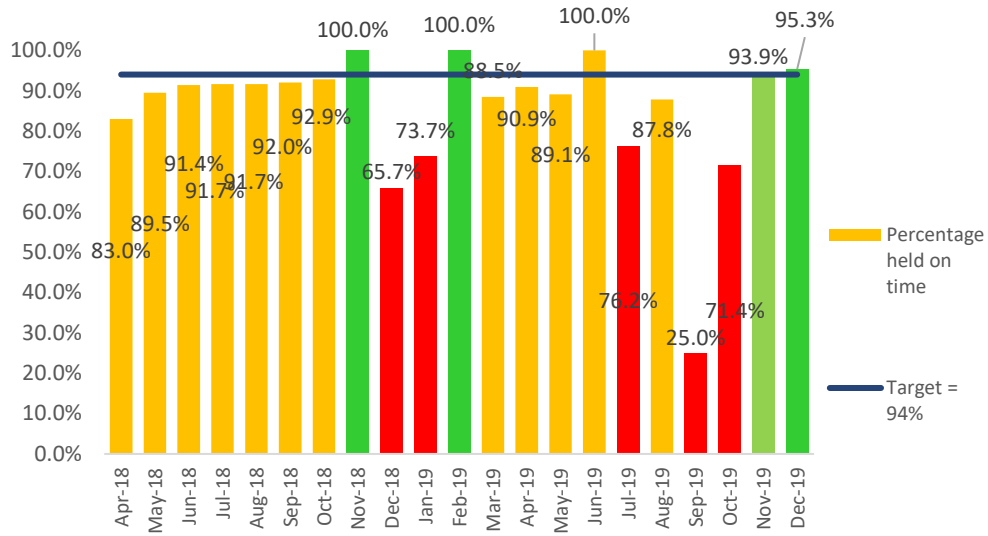
Number of children registered and re-registered onto the Child Protection Register



Percentage of Initial Case Conferences held on time

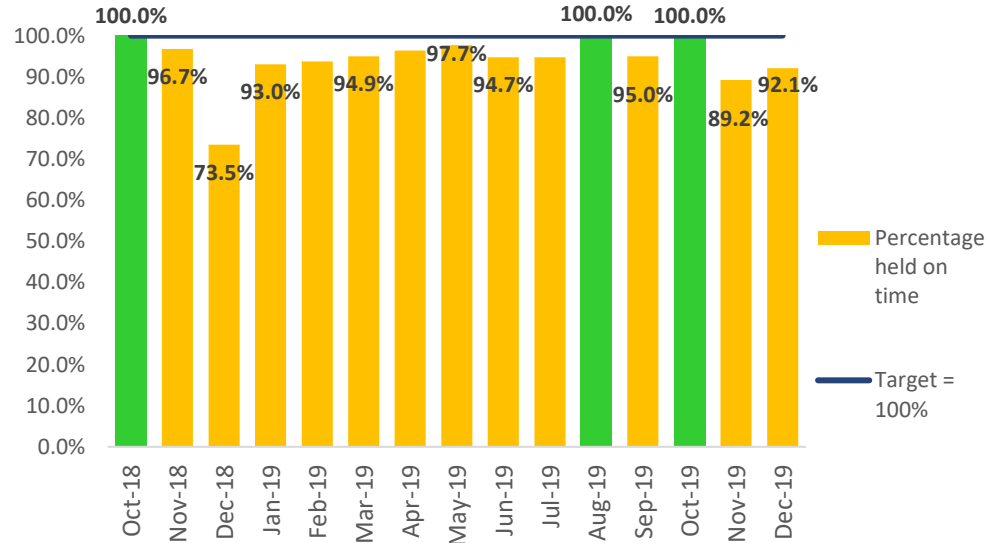
Number of Initial Case Conferences due in month & held on time

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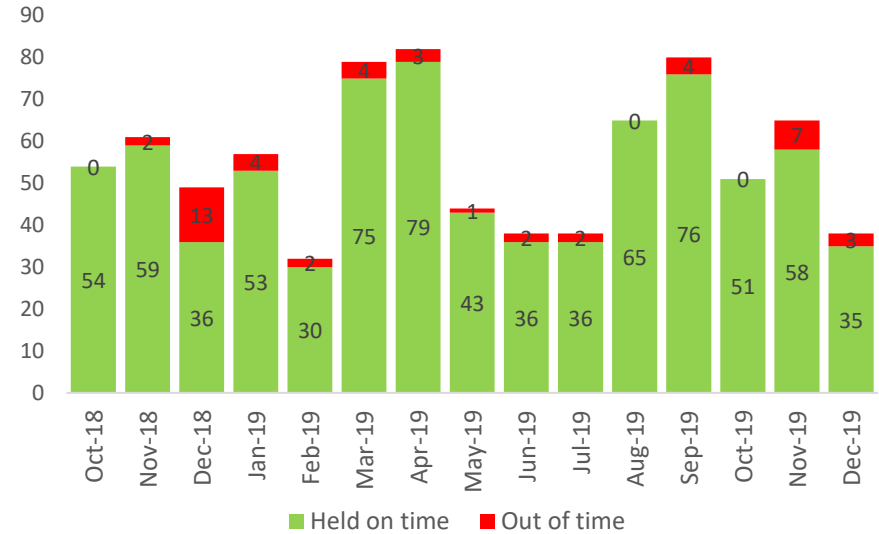
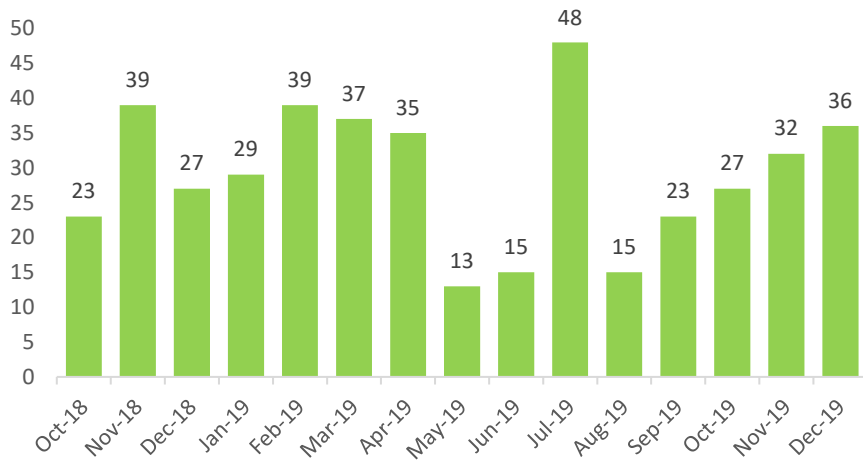
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Percentage of Child Protection Reviews held on time



Number of Child Protection Reviews due and held on time during the month

Number of children removed from the Child Protection Register



% of **Initial Case Conferences held on time** = 86.4% (102 / 118)

All of the 16 late conferences, have since been held. 7 were late due to an admin error (2 sibling groups), 5 at the family's request to ensure the mother could attend (2 sibling groups), 1 was late to ensure the school could attend, another to ensure a translator was available, 1 was due to the social workers absence and another was late to be held with their sibling's conferences.

% of **Child Protection Reviews held on time** = 93.5% (144 / 154)

10 reviews for 4 sibling groups and 1 individual were late during the quarter. Four reviews, 2 sibling groups, were late as other LA, weren't available on time, (transfer out conferences). 2 were late, siblings as mother couldn't attend, due to family illness. 2, siblings, were late due to an admin error. Another 2 were late, siblings, due to panel not being quorate. All conferences have since been held.

Children Looked After

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Commissioning Strategy was presented to Cabinet in November 2019. The Strategy evidences our need and sets out our direction of travel for the next 3 years. Social media and online marketing is impacting on the volume of enquiries (31 full assessments ongoing at 31st December 2019). Meetings with fostering and residential providers to look at improving the provisions for children looked after in Cardiff. Work to develop a small emergency unit is being taken forward alongside work to open an assessment unit. One property has been identified with Housing and another is being sourced. Engagement with residential providers is very positive with lots of interest in setting up new homes in Cardiff. A Marketing Officer for adoption has been appointed and a process is in place with a timely response. Compliance with Court timescales remains good and we are continuing to work on a practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of children looked after continues to be a concern (972 at 31st December from 885 at 30th September 2019). Supply of the right type of services for our most vulnerable children, including scarcity of fostering and residential provision for children and young people with more complex needs. Monitoring the timeliness of children looked after reviews and statutory visits has been affected in recent quarters by recording issues in the review team. Work needs to be progressed with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in Cardiff in relation to fostering and adoption. All young people need to have their Pathway Plan reviewed and updated into the new format by the end of March 2020. Challenges in securing the right accommodation to ensure that care leavers accommodation needs are fully met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the priorities in the Children's Commissioning Strategy, including conversion of 31 currently ongoing full assessments to approved foster carers and delivery of an assessment unit. Focussed work has had an impact and the backlog has reduced considerably. Accurate reporting will be available when the backlog has been cleared. Focus more on faith groups and minority ethnic groups and improve links with partner agencies to improve the choice for Cardiff children needing to be placed out of area. Work is in progress. Move on from Young Person Gateway is consistently being reviewed with support being offered from Housing Options Centre to move clients who are considered suitable for Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation into this type of accommodation. A Children's Services guarantee scheme is being finalised

APPENDIX A

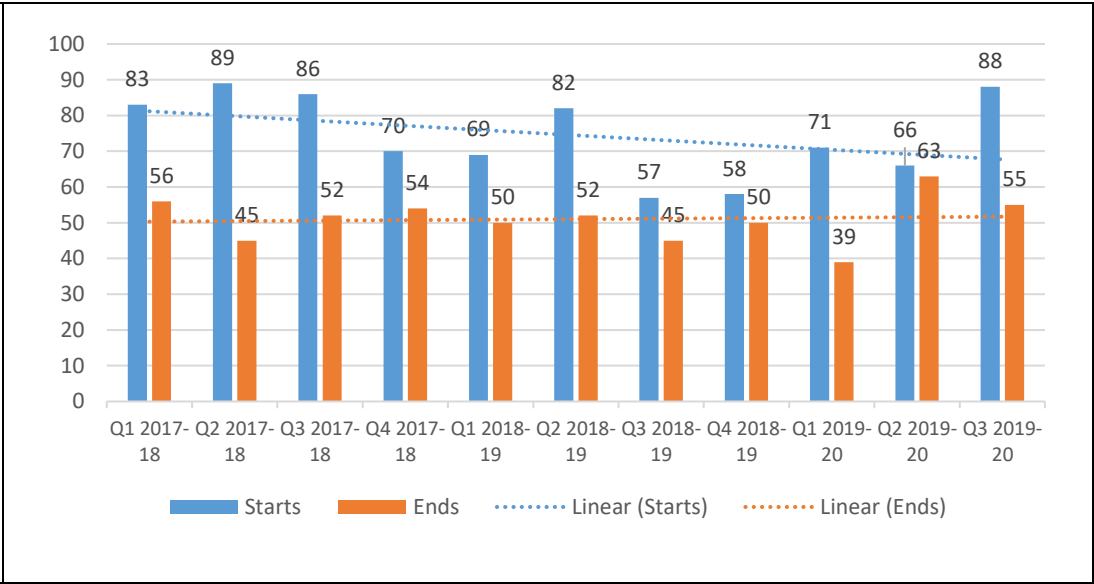
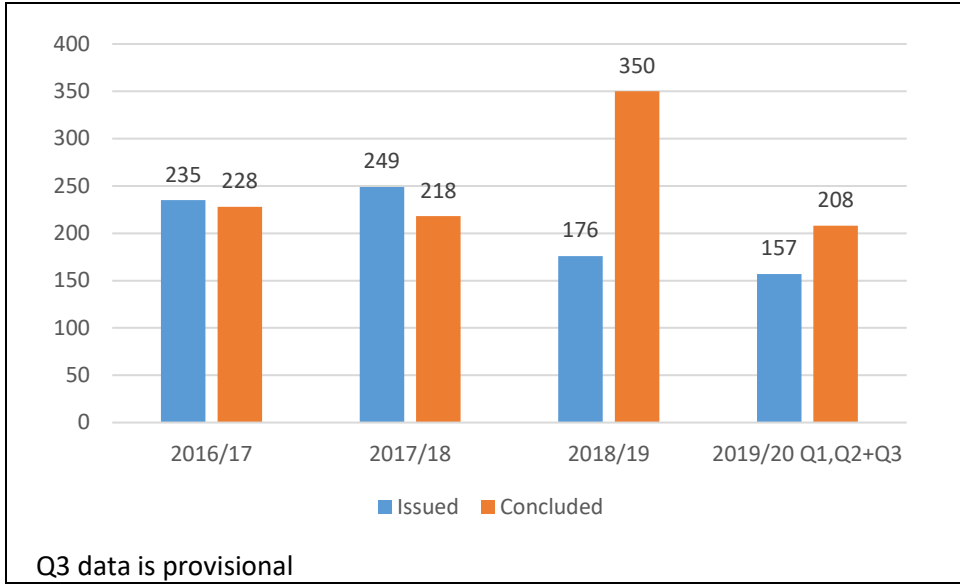
Page 31

<p>guidance document for social workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot with the Child and Family Court Advisory Support Service to accelerate the discharge of Care Orders where parents are in agreement. The intention is for children who are looked after under Placement with Parent Regulations to cease being looked after where it is safe and appropriate to do so. • The Personal Adviser Service is now under the Adolescent Service following the restructure. This allows for a more robust and cohesive service that effectively engages with partners to share resources, and ensure a more effective transition for care leavers. <p>There are strong links between the Adolescent Service and the Into Work Service, with referrals being made to allow care leavers opportunities to access education, training and employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent representation at Housing Panels to ensure accommodation needs of care leavers are met and effectively monitored. • Revised Pathway Plan in place. • The annual Bright Sparks awards were held and were once again a success, celebrating the achievements of our children who are looked after and care leavers. • Youth Offending Service made and sold Christmas wreaths and spent the proceeds on gifts for our care leavers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource to meet demand following the planned implementation of the Extended Entitlement of care leavers. • Permanency planning for children and young people is under developed. • Numbers of children waiting for adoption 12 months after Placement Order made (65, 21 of whom are not yet placed). Although there is a reduction from Quarter 2 when there were 68, children; 28 of whom were not placed). • Delay in completing the review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. 	<p>which will further assist care leavers to secure suitable PRS accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is ongoing and will take into account the existing structure and capacity of the service to meet the requirements of the proposed new duty. • Develop robust permanency planning arrangements. • A Marketing Officer for adoption has been appointed and a process is in place with a timely response. We are building information about where enquiries are coming from to inform our recruitment and with the aim of increasing appropriate enquiries that convert to applications. • Engagement session planned for Quarter 4 so children and young people can be actively involved in the review of the Strategy.
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APPENDIX A

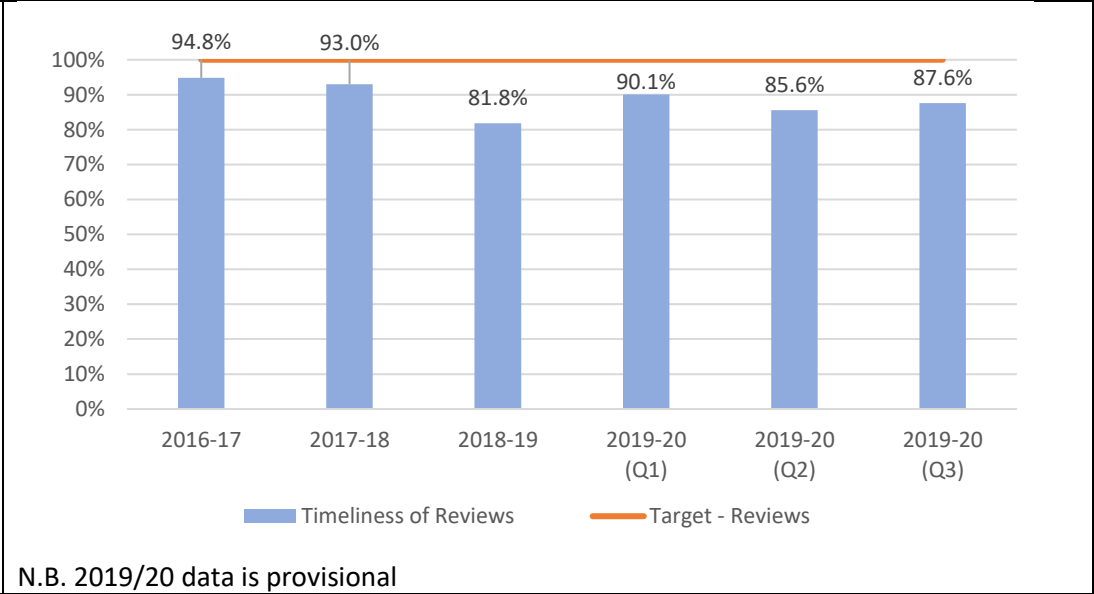
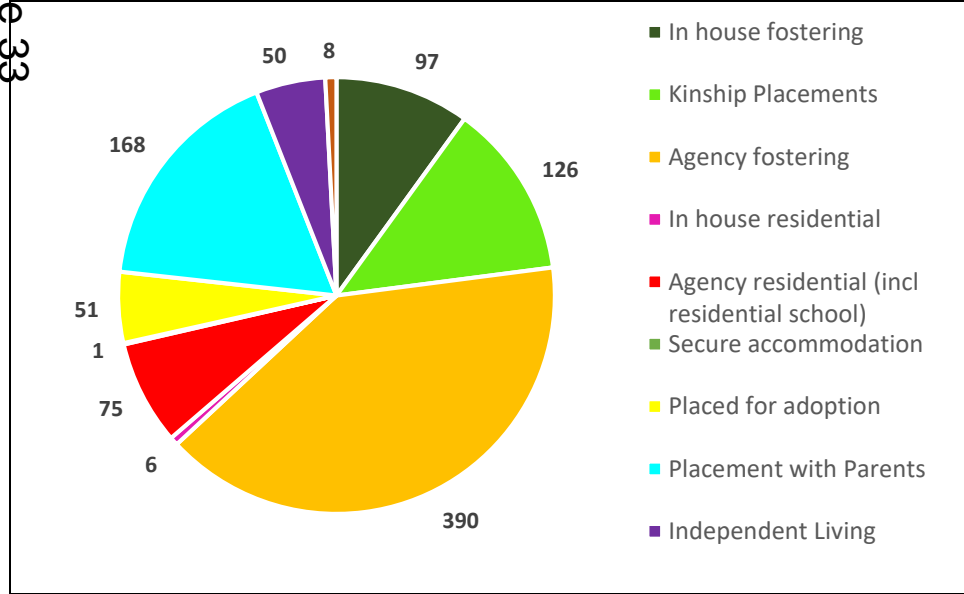
<p>Key Stats</p>	<p>Number of children looked after</p>																										
<p>972 children looked after.</p> <p>88 children started to be looked after in the quarter (up from 66 in Quarter 2). These children comprised of 15 sibling groups and 51 individuals. The average number of children starting to be looked after was 1.33 (1.55 in Quarter 2 and 1.34 in 2018-19).</p> <p>55 ends of being looked after this quarter.</p> <p>399/ 695 (57.4%) children looked after in regulated placements are placed within Cardiff, increasing to 77.0% when taking neighbouring authorities into consideration.</p> <p>99.1% of children looked after allocated to a social worker.</p> <p>Permanence secured for 26 children through adoption since 1st April 2019.</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Data for Number of children looked after</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Number of children</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Apr-17</td><td>731</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun-17</td><td>756</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug-17</td><td>784</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct-17</td><td>802</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec-17</td><td>830</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb-18</td><td>866</td></tr> <tr><td>Apr-18</td><td>869</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun-18</td><td>885</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug-18</td><td>900</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct-18</td><td>934</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec-18</td><td>936</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb-19</td><td>972</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Number of children	Apr-17	731	Jun-17	756	Aug-17	784	Oct-17	802	Dec-17	830	Feb-18	866	Apr-18	869	Jun-18	885	Aug-18	900	Oct-18	934	Dec-18	936	Feb-19	972
Month	Number of children																										
Apr-17	731																										
Jun-17	756																										
Aug-17	784																										
Oct-17	802																										
Dec-17	830																										
Feb-18	866																										
Apr-18	869																										
Jun-18	885																										
Aug-18	900																										
Oct-18	934																										
Dec-18	936																										
Feb-19	972																										
<p>Care Proceedings issued and concluded during year</p>	<p>Starts and ends of being looked after</p>																										

APPENDIX A



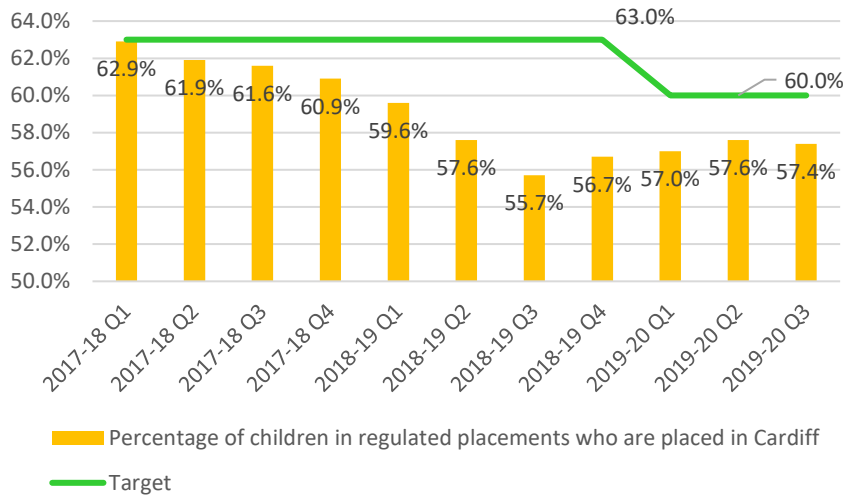
Breakdown of placements by type – as at 31.12.19

Timeliness of Children Looked After Reviews

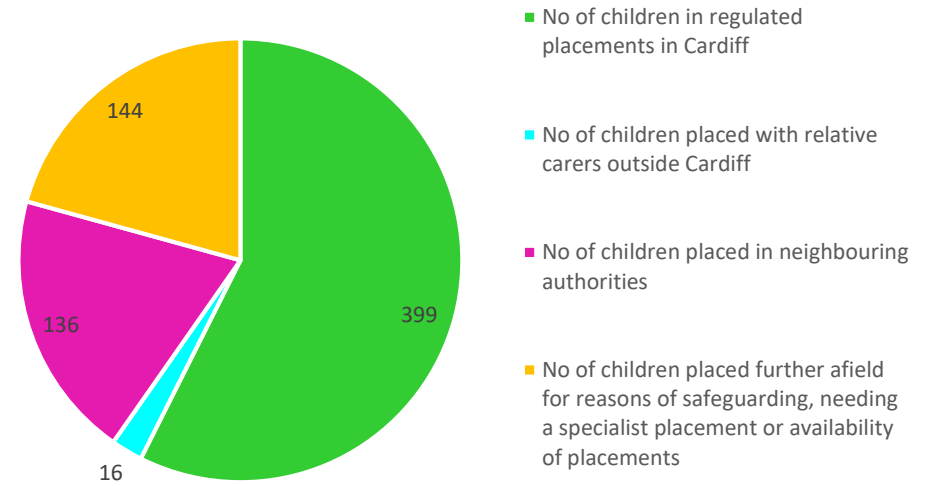


APPENDIX A

Percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff



Breakdown of all children in regulated placements – as at 31.12.19



Workforce

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New video content for the social media channels has been prepared and we are continuing to work on the Social Work Cardiff branding and website content to be able to promote Social Work Cardiff. • Recruitment and Comms have met with a social media advertising specialist to explore full potential of social media opportunities and understand new options. • Recruitment of agency social workers to permanent positions. • Internal promotion of social workers. • Number of students who stay with Cardiff upon qualifying. By providing excellent Practice Learning Opportunities the incentive for students to remain once qualified is high. Discussions and advice with students prior to qualifying has proved productive. • Mentoring staff during their first three years of practice. The support and training given to newly qualified social workers is over and above the requirements of Social Care Wales. • 23 staff are being supported to follow the Continuing Professional Education + Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social worker vacancies – 32.9% in Quarter 3 from 34.6% in Quarter 2. However the result of significant recruitment activity has started to become evident with the net result of social workers starting and leaving the Council being positive (+4 for the Quarter 3 period). • Ability to produce reliable and comparable workforce data due to the ongoing changes in Children's Services. These include the creation of permanent posts, use of agency staff to take forward work enabled by various temporary funding streams (such as the Integrated Care Fund) and the use of agency "managed teams" to support us to meet demand pressures and our commitment to cover maternity leave and sickness absence. • Improve exit interview data - good progress has been made on developing mechanisms to gather relevant information (e.g. Operational Managers meet with social worker who hand in their notice), and some intelligence has proved useful. However, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New secondment scheme introduced with very good progress made - additional places have been offered and taken up by unqualified staff wishing to undertake the social work degree. Recruitment to secondment scheme for 2020 will commence in March. • Implement market supplement by April 2020 whilst longer term proposals are developed to retain social workers in Cardiff, through ensuring competitive rates of pay and ensuring that social workers are fully supported. • Continue weekly workforce monitoring meetings until a stable baseline position is established. • Further develop systems to capture and understand the reasons why people are leaving. • Explore the possibility of automatic notification via Digigov of leavers.

APPENDIX A

<p>(CPEL) pathway during 2019/20. High numbers will continue to be supported during 2020/21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved data collection in relation to workforce. 	<p>uptake of exit interviews continues to be poor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision audit highlighted the need for improvements in this area. Sickness levels this quarter have increased to 14.71 FTE days lost; annual forecast is 20.60 FTE days lost, which exceeds Children’s Services target of 12.9 considerably and is the fourth highest across the council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and implement Supervision Policy. Additional training on Supervision Skills will be provided from April 2020. Sickness is monitored in detail at weekly Children’s Management Meetings. Further analysis to be undertaken to better understand the issues around long term sickness.
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APPENDIX A

Key Stats

During Quarter 3:

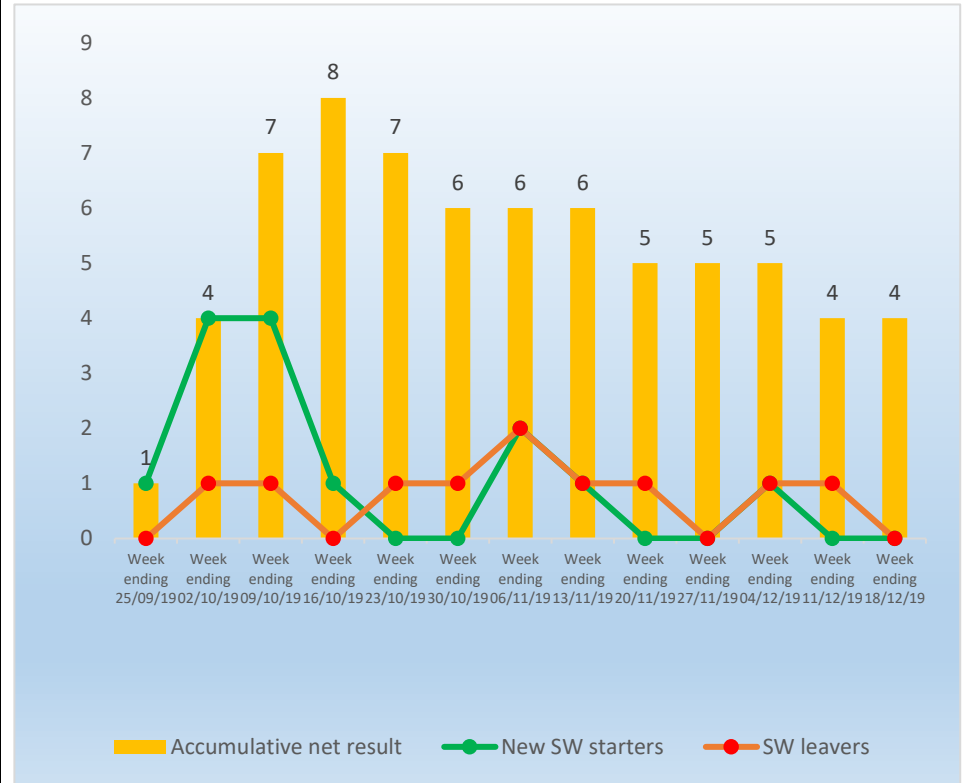
14 new Social Workers started filling 11 grade 7 posts and 3 grade 8 posts = 14 posts filled.

10 Social Workers left: 2 grade 7, 7 grade 8 and 1 grade 9 Social Workers left the LA = 9.4 vacancies created.

The net result of social workers starting and leaving the Council is an increase in 4 social workers over quarter 3.

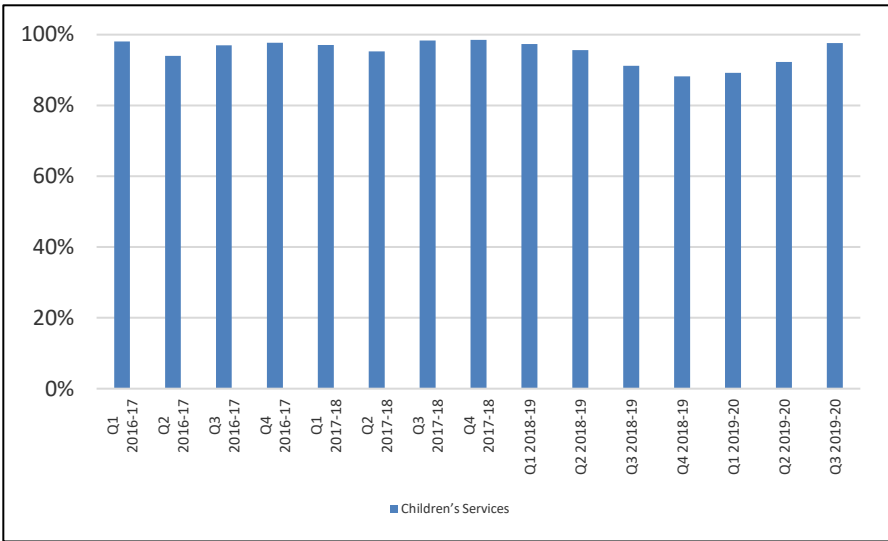
As at the end of December 2019. Average caseload 17.5 cases. Maximum caseload = 33 cases. Minimum caseload = 4.

Social workers starting and leaving the Council



Sickness

Return to work interviews



As at quarter 3, 82 / 84 return to work interviews held, 2 pending.

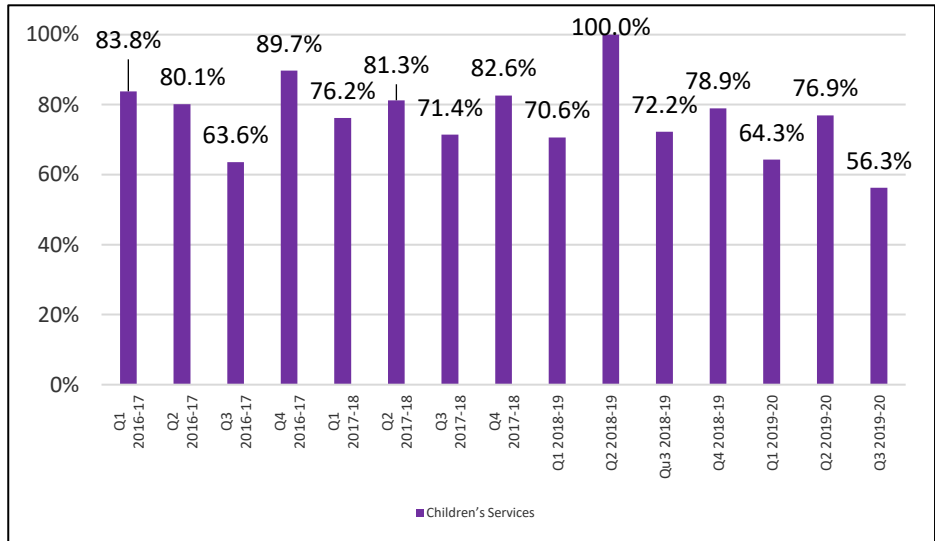
Source: Digigov

FTE Target = 12.9	Q1 2019-20	Q2 2019-20	Q3 2019-20	Q4 2019-20
CS Sickness FTE days lost per person	4.77	10.00	14.71	
CS Sickness FTE days lost per person forecast	20.52	22.00	20.60	

Qu 3's result for 2018/19 = 8.73, this year's 3rd quarter result of 14.71 shows an increase of 5.98 days lost to sickness.

Corporate HR Data

Sickness stage interviews completed

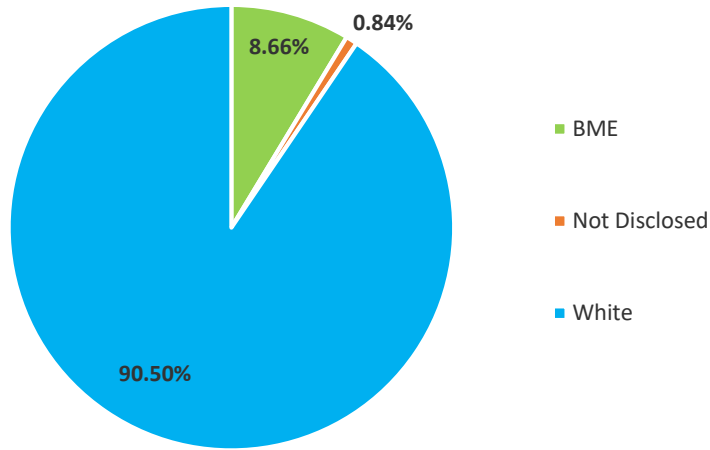


As at quarter 3, out of 16 triggers hit, 9 stage interviews were held. 4 missed, 0 were pending and 3 were not conducted (discounted).

Source: Digigov

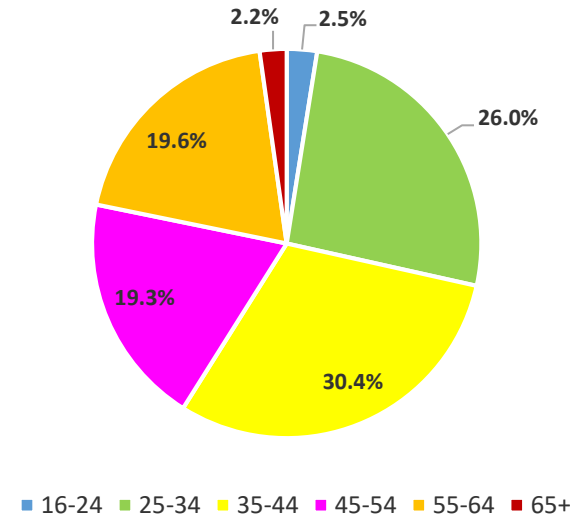
Profile of Children's Services staff

Ethnicity of Children's Services workforce



Data provided by HR

Age profile of Children's Services workforce



Data provided by HR

As at 31st December 2019.

APPENDIX A

Social Worker's given reasons for leaving employment:

Exit Reasons	2016-2017			2017 -2018			2018-2019			Quarters 1,2&3 2019-2020		
	PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER	SOCIAL WORKER	Total	PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER	SOCIAL WORKER	Total	PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER	SOCIAL WORKER	Total	PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER	SOCIAL WORKER	Total
Alternative Employment	3	10	13	2	11	13	0	13	13	3	17	20
Dismissal - Long Term Absence	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0		0
Following Maternity Leave	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
No Reason Given	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	4	4	0	4	4
Normal Retirement	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	1	1
Personal Reasons	1	2	3	2	4	6	1	7	8	1	2	3
Total	4	18	22	4	20	24	1	28	29	4	25	29

Source: Digigov

Quality

What is working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overarching Social Services Quality Assurance Framework is being drafted to oversee arrangements in Children’s and Adult Services. Mechanisms are in place for the Director to be provided with a Quality Assurance overview in relation to Children’s Services, Adult Services and Resources on a monthly basis. This includes areas such as performance, case audits, compliments and complaints and internal and external reviews for example. Children’s Services quality issues will be discussed regularly at dedicated quality and performance Children’s Management Meetings. The outcome of these meetings will feed the mechanism mentioned above. Quality Assurance of CareFirst forms for use of Signs of Safety has commenced and a system will be developed to feedback to team managers to support them to instil confidence within their teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to drive forward the new Quality Assurance Framework and avoid drift in delivery until vacant Quality Assurance Officer post recruited to. Completion of case file audits by Team Managers remains low. This makes it difficult to compare cases across teams and identify areas of strengths / weakness within case management. Overview of audit activity is required, including a tracker and audit process flowchart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment to vacant Quality Assurance Officer post underway. The position is currently filled via Matrix. Monthly case audits. Supervision and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) audit to form part of a rolling quarterly audit programme with dip sampling of MASH cases in between. Mechanisms to be developed.

Case file audits
48 (year to date)

Supervisions
Data development

Training
Data development

Exit interviews
Data development

**CYNGOR CAERDYDD
CARDIFF COUNCIL**

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 March 2020

**INQUIRY REPORT “OUT OF COUNTY PLACEMENTS”.- FURTHER RESPONSE
AND PROGRESS**

Background

1. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considered the Cabinet response to its inquiry “Out of County Placements” at its meeting on 11 December 2018. The Committee welcomed the Cabinet response and agreed to seek a progress report on the implementation of the accepted recommendations.
2. A copy of a more detailed response and actions against each of the recommendations is attached at **Appendix A**. In line with R10, a short briefing note is attached **Appendix B** providing members with background information on Signs of Safety. The response sets out the progress to date on implementing each of the recommendations together with details of the next steps to be taken in progressing the work.

Scope of Scrutiny

3. This report enables the Committee to review, assess and comment of the progress being made in addressing the recommendations as set out in the inquiry report.

Way Forward

4. Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children and Families) and relevant officers from the Social Services directorate have been invited to present the directorate’s progress on the accepted recommendations (attached at **Appendix A**) and answer Members’ questions.

5. Members may also wish to review and assess the progress being made in addressing the recommendations copy attached at **Appendix A** and provide the Cabinet Member and Officers with their comments, concerns or advice.

Legal Implications

6. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making 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 the 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

7. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making 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. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Committee reviews the response attached at **Appendix A** together with the information presented at the meeting and provide any recommendations, comments or advice to the Cabinet Member and Director with any comments, concerns or recommendations
- Identify any possible areas for consideration in the development of the Committee's work programme for 2020-2021

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services

4 March 2020

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Appendix A

R1 : All placements must be made in the interest of the Child, minimising the impact on them, their education and well being

- Children and young people's needs continue to be at the very centre of all care planning including when seeking a home for them.
- There are several 'Decision Making Panels' that oversee the Care Planning process in relation to finding suitable homes for children and young people to ensure that there is suitable oversight of the matching process.
- The supervision process is also a forum for discussing and agreeing what is in the best interests of children.
- The Independent Reviewing Officer process is enshrined in statute and ensures that all children that are looked after have their care plans reviewed by an independent officer.
- All children and young people who are looked after have access to an independent advocate and are offered this service (part of the active offer duty of the SSWBW Act).
- The senior management teams within Education and Children's Services now hold joint management meetings.
- The Assistant Directors for Children Services and Education meet monthly to discuss any issue arising for young person.

R2 : As Cardiff is the fast growing city and is promoting itself as a great place to grow up; placements should be made, wherever possible in Cardiff.

Delivering Excellent Outcomes for Children, Children's Services Strategy 2019-2022

- The Children's Services Strategy and the associated Delivering Excellent Outcomes Programme has a number of work-streams that have focused on ensuring children are placed close to home.
- We have a [Children's Commissioning Strategy](#) that sets out the key priorities for the service. Progress is already being made and an action plan for the delivery of the strategy is under development. Key commissioning priorities include:
 1. Complete the reshaping of **early help and support** to families to prevent the escalation of needs and reduce the need for alternative homes including Family Group Conferencing prior to any child becoming looked after.
 2. Where it is safe to do so, we will look to bring our children and young people back closer to Cardiff, using a Re-unification Framework to support children to return safely to their own families, as we know this achieves better outcomes for them.

Appendix A

3. To respond to the **therapeutic and mental health and well-being needs** of Children Looked After, their parents and carers through the development of a range of therapeutic service with partners.
4. Reshape our respite provision to offer flexible short break opportunities including emergency provision for children with disabilities, and other children young people and families.
5. Redesign our Local Fostering service in order to increase our numbers of Cardiff Foster Carers homes for children.
6. Increase the availability of local placements through our collaborative market engagement with providers to shape provision to better meet the needs of our children and young people.
7. To commission and develop **additional internal residential provision** in Cardiff to enable flexibility especially for complex cases.
8. To further develop accommodation **sufficiency for vulnerable young people and those leaving care**
9. To further develop our **understanding of the needs** of this important group of children and young people by completing a detailed needs analysis.

- We have improved the offer to in-house foster carers including an increase in their financial remuneration this has resulted in a significant increase in Applications with over 34 people currently going through the assessment process.
- We are in the process of commissioning an Assessment Centre in Cardiff to ensure that YP are robustly assessed prior to being placed in residential provision.
- We have recommissioned the residential respite provision at Ty Storrie for YP with complex needs.
- We have significantly increased the number of kinship carers from 96 at 31st December 2018 to 126 at 31st December 2019.
- The percentage of children in regulated placements in Cardiff has increased slightly from 55.7% at 31st December 2018 to 57.4% at 31st December 2019.

R3 : Social Services Directorate should undertake a well-being assessment of all of its Children's Services social workers over the next 12 months

- We created and appointed to a Retention Officer post unfortunately the person withdrew and the post has been utilised to assist with the recruitment process.
- We have undertaken regular staff surveys.
- We have a mentoring service for newly qualified social workers.
- We have introduced a supervision practice manual.
- We have been under-taking regular supervision audits.

Appendix A

- We undertake annual PPD reviews and 6 monthly reviews.
- We have set up ambassador meetings.
- We have regular staffing events.
- Team meetings.
- Senior managers including the Director and Assistant Director have an open door policy and are accessible to all staff.
- Welfare checklist in place.
- Restructured management team designed to best support workforce.

R4 : Social Services Directorate must develop and fully implement a social worker recruitment and retention strategy to encourage new applicants and support to retain staff by 31st March 2019

- A workforce strategy has been published.
- A recruitment and retention project is in place with detailed action plans.
- We have created several posts to support the recruitment process to ensure it is efficient.
- We have weekly interview sessions.
- We have rolling adverts and utilise social media.
- We have restructured the operational management level and have completed the recruitment process.
- We are moving to the next phase of the restructure.
- We have secured a market supplement via a business case.
- We are reviewing the skill mix to ensure we are sustainable for the future.
- We have robust performance information that is monitored weekly.

Key Recruitment Milestones	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Review and recruit to Recruitment Post													
Implement Market Supplement													

Appendix A

Introduce Agency Peripatetic	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
Procure alt' Temp Agency Team	White	Yellow	Yellow	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
Increase Agency Cover	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Increase Support Staff (agency ???)	White	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Increase Business Support (agency??)	White	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Review Skill Mix & Restructure	White	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Create Permanent Peripatetic Team	White	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Recruit Final Year Students	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Increase Secondment Scheme	Red	Red	Red	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White

R5 : As corporate parents, all staff and Councillors must work in collaboration with all partners to ensure the safeguarding of all children

- The current CPAC Terms of Reference are being refreshed in partnership with an independent advisor.
- There is a robust corporate safeguarding policy which is being reviewed by the same independent advisor in terms of the role of members.
- The Corporate parenting Strategy is being refreshed led by the views of children and young people and seeks to further strengthen working collaboratively with stakeholders.
- CPAC member training has been arranged.
- A local operational safeguarding Board has been established that is chaired by the LA CEO.
- The regional safeguarding board is chaired by the DSS in Cardiff and is now more effective.

Appendix A

- A new Operational Manager with responsibility for all aspects of Safeguarding has been created and appointed to.
- The Exploitation strategy will develop wider links with all aspects of the corporate entity
- The community safety partnership board now receives reports from the YOS board and other safeguarding fora
- Council Directorates have completed a self-evaluation in relation to safeguarding and actions plans to address identified issues are under development.
- Corporate safeguarding e-learning module available and designated as mandatory.
- Action plan following internal audit of corporate safeguarding arrangements fully implemented.

R6 : The new management team for People and Communities, to work with the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee to, review the structure and operation of the service to ensure that it works with all parts of the Council in undertaking their corporate parenting duties, by 31 March 2019.

- The restructure of Children Services senior management tier is complete.
- The Children Services strategy has been published.
- The service has created 3 locality teams thus allowing greater focus on communities and partnerships.
- Children Services attend the wider Housing and Communities extended management forums.
- There is a review ongoing regarding Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.
- Children Services now have joint management meetings with Education.
- The current Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Terms of Reference are being refreshed in partnership with an independent advisor.
- There is a robust corporate safeguarding policy, which is being reviewed by the same independent advisor in terms of the role of members.
- The Corporate parenting Strategy is being refreshed led by the views of children and young people and seeks to further strengthen working collaboratively with stakeholders.
- Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee member training has been arranged.
- Review of Corporate Parenting Strategy is underway with the involvement of young people.
- Post being created to provide support to Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

Appendix A

R7 : It must task officers to review the early help service and reorganise the management and control of all early intervention and prevention initiatives to enable them to be under the control of children's services within the next 12 months.

- Cabinet approved a new model of early help and family support in October 2018 which will be managed within the People and Communities Directorate. Professional oversight and accountability for the governance of the statutory part of the service sits with the Director of Social Services in accordance with statutory duties for early intervention and prevention.
- There is a governance board which oversees the work of the various aspects of the EH services and how they interface with Intake and Assessment and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- There are performance reports, which are scrutinised by the board, and any issue escalated for resolution.
- The formal launch of the EH service has happened relatively recently and its effectiveness at reducing demand on CS is yet to be established however initial reporting is as follows;
- The number of people supported through the Family Gateway = 2,187. The number of enquiries and well-being contacts. (1,754 in Q2) (5,622 year to date at 31st December 2019)
- The number of people supported by the Family Help Team = 467 (425 in Q2). (1,198 year to date at 31st December 2019), No of households = 219.
- The number of people supported by Support4Families = 459 (527 in Q2). (1,512 year to date at 31st December 2019).

R8 : A strategic approach to commission placements, to improve outcomes and safely reduce the number of children being looked after, must be developed and implemented as soon as possible.

- A placement sufficiency plan has been established and a commissioning strategy has been approved by cabinet.
- There are 9 key priorities which dovetail with the Children Services strategy and are monitored via the Delivering Excellence Board that is chaired by the Chief Executive.
- The commissioning priorities are closely linked to the shifting the balance of care work-streams which are what underpin Cardiff's approach to safely reducing the number of Children Looked After.
- We have moved the line management of the placement team to sit alongside the fostering team.
- We have placed a social worker into the placement finding team.
- We are developing a Reunification Framework, including commissioning Family Group Conferences.
- Also, see R2 above.

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<p>R9: It tasks officers in the Social Service Directorate to review the Placement Commissioning arrangements by 31 March 2019.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per previous response. • High cost placements are reviewed monthly by a panel that is chaired by the Substitute family Operational Manager. 	
<p>R10 : It continues to implement the Signs of Safety framework, within the next 12 months and provide evidence of its impact.</p>	<p>This recommendation is partially accepted</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from Councils where Signs of Safety has been successfully implemented and embedded indicates a longer timescale is needed to really embed transformed practice. • Phase one of the project commenced in April 2016 and focused on the introduction of the model and setting the foundations across the service. During phase one, significant progress has been made in the delivery of learning and development of all staff, focused and structured training has been delivered as well as bespoke tailored support provided to teams and individuals • A refresh of the Signs of Safety Implementation Plan is underway to ensure it is focussed on the right systemic changes to support practice improvement. Independent quality assurance work is underway to ensure there is clear evidence to support the next phase of implementation. • Signs of Safety Awareness Briefings have been delivered to key partner agencies. • Tools to measure the effectiveness of Signs of Safety have been developed. • Regular briefings are held, and attended by colleagues from Health and Education. • Case reflection meetings are also held regularly are working well - champions are now holding these meetings within the teams. • Signs of Safety has been included in staff inductions (e.g. for the Personal Adviser Service and new Ty Storrie staff). • A celebration event was held in January. • Quality Assurance of CareFirst forms for use of Signs of Safety has commenced and a system will be developed to feedback to team managers to support them to instil confidence within their teams. • Signs of Safety Briefing attached in appendix a. 	
<p>R11 : It tasks officers to review, current demand, in to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure the consistent use of criteria by partners</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was an improvement plan put in place regarding the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub in Dec 2018 – since that time practice and processes have improved. • A permanent team manager has recently been appointed and plans to review the skill mix of the team are underway 	

Appendix A

- There is an operational multi agency board that oversees the governance of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- A Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub coordinator post is currently being advertised and appointed to.
- A review of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub has been postponed due to the National Independent Safeguarding Board announcing their own national review of Multi Agency Safeguarding arrangements.
- A clear plan of work is being progressed by the board, which includes developing a more detailed performance framework.
- A threshold document has been developed.
- There are audits planned for MASH in order to make additional improvements for thresholds between partners and CS staff.
- Training plans will be considered following the above audits.
- In line with the new Children's Services structure, a new Operational Manager is in post and oversees Support4Families, MASH and the Intake and Assessment teams.
- Work to improve processes within MASH has commenced and will cover the end to end process including referral routes into Intake and Assessment. This work should be used as a basis for shaping the next steps of the improvement plan.

R12 : Officers must ensure that the placement of 0-5 year olds, out of county, is only undertaken when it is in the best interests of the Child.

This recommendation is partially accepted

- The placement of 0-5 year olds out of area will only take place in exceptional circumstances and will always be in the best interests of the child.
- There are a sibling group of 2 who are in separate residential provision who were under 6 at the time of their admission. They both have had a number of foster placement breakdowns and require a therapeutic type residential setting to meet their needs due to the trauma they have experienced earlier in their lives.

R13 : To develop and implement a Placement Strategy which should include, to recruit and retain Foster Carers, including, continuous advertisement programme, additional support, allowances, and retainers, to be in place within the next 12 months

- The 3 Year Children Services strategy and Commissioning Strategy have now replaced the Placement strategy – underpinning these strategies are various work-streams that report into the Delivering Excellent Outcomes board that is chaired by the CEO.
- The current number of foster carers working for the Council (not including kinship carers) is 88.
- There are currently 34 full assessments ongoing (Feb 2020).
- The recruitment target is a net increase of 8 foster carers over a 12 month period.

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- The aim is to increase the number of children placed with in-house foster carers to 110 in 2019/20 and 120 in 2020/21).
- The number of children currently with in house foster carers is 102 (Feb 2020).
- The number of children placed with Independent foster agencies is 380 (Feb 2020).
- There have been 46 applications received in the last 12 months.
- There have been 6 new foster carers approved in the last 12 months.
- The average length of time from initial application to actual recruitment in 2019/20 was 120.7 working days.

R14 : It ensures that a review of all vacant fostering placements, Agency, Council and Kinship options, is undertaken to verify that there is appropriate matching and stable placements for all children being Looked After.

Please see previous response

R15 : Officers are to develop and implement a building programme of homes for children in Cardiff, utilising every possible agency, as an Invest to Save project, within the next 12 months.

- A Corporate Wide Project Team has been established which is driving forward this recommendation; it reports into the Commissioning Board and the Delivering Excellent Outcomes Board.
- The Project is working to deliver on some of the key objectives of the commissioning strategy and in the first phase is progressing the creation of a residential assessment centre and an emergency assessment unit utilising the councils own housing stock for the latter

Appendix A

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is being undertaken with external providers who have expressed an interest in opening children’s homes in Cardiff 	
<p>R16: It ensures that future annual placement budgets must reflect anticipated number of Looked After children at future year mid-point, to help ensure that Social Services do not over spend</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has provided significant levels of additional funding to Children’s Services in recent years with a net increase to the budget of £5.8 million (11.86%) in 2018/19 and a further increase in 20/21 of £4.85 million to realign the base, plus and additional of £2.2 million in the reserve. • The biggest pressures facing CS continue to be high cost placements and agency staff – the increase in the annual budget is predicated on their being the ability to spend to save. 	
<p>R17: Savings accrued from returning children back to Cardiff are reinvested into preventative and early help initiatives</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see previous response. 	
<p>R18: Officers investigate whether Greenhill School could admit Girls to minimise out of County Placements</p>	<p>This recommendation is accepted in principle</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is understood that the ‘Development of the Schools Estate ‘— will attend to the need for a higher level of suitable provision for children with additional learning needs <p>Check with Education</p>	
<p>R19 Action Plan: The Cabinet Member ensures that an action plan is developed to ensure the implementation of these recommendations within an agreed timescale as part of the response to this report.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Actions arising from the recommendations contained within the original Out of County Task and Finish have shaped the 3 year children’s strategy and commissioning strategy that are underpinned by various work-streams and projects that report to the Delivering Excellent Outcomes Board that is chaired by the CEO. 	

Signs of Safety Briefing for scrutiny

Signs of Safety (SofS) is a framework for child protection practice consisting of principles based on conceptual and practice elements. It is a strengths-based, safety-organised, solution focussed approach to child protection casework. SofS is designed to integrate professional and family knowledge in the assessment of risk and any subsequent planning.

- Working relationships are fundamental – honest and respectful relationships between the worker and families and between all professionals involved to achieve a shared understanding of what needs to change and how this will be achieved within a culture where collaborative, appreciative inquiry methods are valued
- Stance of critical inquiry – critical thinking to create a culture of reflective practice, designed to minimise error, allow admission of errors, and support regular review of the balance of strengths and dangers to avoid drift, which may perpetuate an overly optimistic or pessimistic view of the family.
- Locating grand aspirations in everyday practice – where the experience of the child is at the centre and where families and front line professionals judge the effectiveness of practice.

The SofS assessment, defined as a mapping, records:

- Past harm – refers to harm that has actually occurred, not what professionals fear may occur.
- Future danger –based on past harm, family history and patterns of behaviour, and clearly sets out what children’s services are worried could happen if there were to be no change in the adult carers behaviour.
- Complicating factors – any circumstances that may be associated with risk to children and young people such as poor mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, and domestic violence. Attention is paid to the underlying issues that mean that the family find it difficult to move forward.
- Next steps – specific safety goals where Children’s Services clearly identify what they would want to see the family doing more of to ensure they keep their child/ren safe at all times.

All language is jargon free and understandable to everyone in the family.

The mapping is set out in 3 columns. The 3 columns define ‘what we are worried about’, encompassing the harm, danger statements and complicating factors; ‘what is working’, which includes elements contributing to existing strength and safety; and ‘what needs to happen’, which is the vision of what things will look like, and is key to creating the safety plan. In addition, scaling questions are used with professionals

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and family members, which allow a judgement to be made on the safety of the child(ren).

Implementation of the model Signs of Safety had been reported to be stronger than it really was at the outset; although intensive training for managers was undertaken in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Possibly the biggest challenge to sustainability is the over-dependence on an individual who had been employed in the role of Signs of Safety Lead. The development of networks for practice leads, practice champions and committed managers across their authorities was seen as a way to counter this, as well as sustainability plans that covered areas such as training, leadership and alignment of practice and processes.

Cardiff had trained many of its staff in SofS over the previous 3 years but the approach has not yet embedded to the degree that is consistent. The plan is to train all staff in the SofS methods and encourage them to use it in their practice. High vacancy levels amongst social workers, and high caseloads, compelled the authority to employ a large number of agency (locum) workers. There was a core of skilled people who had been trained but after a little time it was seen that they were unable to support one another to the extent required, it subsequently proved more difficult to engage teams.

Signs of Safety implementation within Children's Services in Cardiff is an opportunity to introduce a consistent approach to social work practice and reconfigure Children's Services. All front line staff had been on the 2-day training, along with some staff from partner agencies, and a majority of the managers have been on the 5-day training. The commitment from the senior management team has continued; it is as the vehicle for embedding a unifying framework and consistent practice, which would help to transform Children's Services.

SofS is intended to give social workers the opportunity to create plans in collaboration with families and would both empower families to take responsibility and address low morale across the social work workforce. Many social workers reported that they were unable to do the work with families that they wanted to because of high caseloads and a drift away from direct work with families, the intention was to shift to a position that valued a high level of engagement with children and families, and placed them at the heart of the system.

Cardiff has now developed its own SofS training and briefings on all aspects of the model, which includes our multi agency colleagues. Most social workers had attended this training but, while some social workers used SofS, it is not embedded across Children's services although there are pockets of really good practice. The challenge for those committed to SofS was to be able to take the next step and use the opportunities provided to move it from an 'add on' to the practice framework at the centre of all social work with families. In the longer term, it is expected that a more consistent approach would contribute to a more stable workforce.

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Discussions with practitioners and managers highlighted some specific areas of confusion, in relation to terminology, plans and meetings. This has resulted in formulating and introducing a set of expectations for practitioners working within the signs of safety practice framework by service area. This tool brings together the values and principles that underpin the work in Cardiff, with questions that 'prompt' thinking and reflection on practice and tools that enable practitioners to carry out the work. It is anticipated that social workers and their managers will use this tool to reflect on casework individually or in individual or group supervision.

Whatever practice framework is in place, practitioners and their managers also work within the framework of The Children Act 1989 and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and must adhere to any associated statutory guidance.

Cardiff are overwhelmingly positive about the benefits of SofS as a practice framework. The implementation challenges included recruitment and retention of social workers, However there is optimism maintaining SofS that would, in the long term, help to address this challenge and strengthen the service that is provided to families.

There is evidence that SofS is being more widely applied, The greatest progress is the embedding of an organisational commitment to SofS by:

- using plain language that could be readily understood by families (and other professionals)
- using tools to engage children and young people – for example, My Three Houses; Fairy/Wizard tool
- mapping cases, both by individual social workers and in teams
- encouraging families to hold their own Network Meetings to create safety plans
- using mapping across initial and review child protection conferences, and in all related groups
- no longer using dictatorial Written Agreements and Contracts of Expectation in favour of collaborative working together.

The weakest areas of change were in relation to:

- relationships between some of the professionals and family members
- spending the necessary direct contact time with children and their families
- confidence that the service was intervening at the right time
- creating a culture where it is permissible to admit mistakes
- support for social workers with administrative tasks

Getting stronger within SofS

- a reasonably high level of confidence in using SofS as a framework as well as in using the associated tools
- increased use of safety planning and mapping, using the Three Houses tool with nearly all their families but Words and Pictures to a lesser extent

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- that the quality of their assessments had improved since the adoption of the SofS framework
- that safety planning, including mapping and scaling, helped to identify and manage risk
- that SofS helped to achieve better communication with families, and greater inclusion of children and young people.
- recruiting high-quality staff those who had most recently adopted SofS were more likely to rate themselves as having made most progress in their understanding and integration of the model compared with those who had more experience.

There are also comments from social workers that they did not have the time to apply the approach as thoroughly as they would wish, but recognise that:

- SofS supported a more focused approach to goals and how they could be achieved
- families had been involved in goal planning, they were more likely to report that their goals had been achieved,

Areas that require attention.

- social workers not given clear enough information about the criteria by which social workers would assess their progress, which indicates an area where improvement is required.

A substantial amount of training has occurred, and we have recognised the need to provide a continuous training cycle, despite the costs associated with both provision and attendance. A great deal of management time is required to support implementation.

Early Help Services in Cardiff have now adopted the model, – this is hoped to lead to reductions in the demands on children’s services and other agencies.

Offering training in SofS to partner agencies is starting to improve communication, particularly over referrals made to children’s social care

Despite an overall commitment to ongoing training, there had been different opinions on what was needed. Some regarded the 5-day training as essential for every social worker, even if they could not afford to put that into practice. An insufficient number of practice leads were attending briefing sessions, said to be the result of their workloads. As a result, social workers had failed to prioritise attendance, which, in turn, meant that consistency in SofS use and practice has not been achieved across their services. This is a very practical problem.

Changing the culture of Cardiff also remains a significant challenge for many. They share a belief that leadership at all levels is the key to giving staff the confidence, not just in their own skills, but in an organisation's willingness to support them to work in ways which may be different from how they had worked previously. For example, the safest option in the short term might be to remove a child, but this was not necessarily the best long-term outcome for the child. By placing SofS at the centre of

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their practice, staff were considered to be more likely to take decisions that balance the child's welfare and possible risks more frequently. This is a crucial issue. If social workers are to take these steps, they need assurance that not only will their thinking and recommendations be supported but, that having satisfied supervisors about their judgements, they will subsequently have strong managerial support.

All staff, however new to the authority and however temporary, need to understand the basic principles. But many remain frustrated that the limitations of their IT systems meant staff were still not able to easily upload the work done with families on their computers, and the rigidity of the system tends to conflict with SofS principles. The problem lays in the fact that IT systems had been set up to service existing statutory guidance. Once the recording processes are aligned to any extent with SofS this issue would be resolved.

A good IT system is linked with continuing to develop social workers' skills to undertake work with children. Adopting practice that was based on the principles of SofS had exposed a skill deficit that had often been disguised when a more procedural approach to social work practice had been in place. They also identified social workers who opposed SofS as well as those who were 'cherry picking' the parts of SofS that they thought would work with families, and then going on to select the families with whom they used SofS.

While Cardiff invests heavily in their newly qualified social workers, who, it was said, usually adapted to the model well, a greater challenge was presented when more experienced social workers resisted change: This is about moving to collaborative practice and co-production and about doing your practice with people, not to them. It's a whole mindset shift and we're not there on that, because some people still like the comfort in a nice form and a tickbox. It is about changing hearts and minds, and organisational culture, which you do not get from training.

The situation where managers who had either not attended any SofS training or, if they had, failed to apply it, are responsible for colleagues who were critics of SofS, this can be described as 'the lethal combination' for implementation. Although reported to be the minority, most resistance to SofS comes from some of the most experienced social workers. Their opposition was linked to perceived confusion about the role of 'past harm' and a belief that it was downplayed in SofS practice. The counter argument that, while past acts should not dominate judgements about the present situation, recording harm that has occurred in the past is integral to SofS mapping, had proved difficult to make with this group of workers.

Work continues to be needed to make sure that parents, social workers and IRO and Conference chairs are prepared, in an attempt to improve continuity and consistency Cardiff is having success with the introduction of Family Network Meetings (FNMs), which draw family members into decision-making on how to keep children safe and develop plans to do so. Families are coming up with plans to stop proceedings being initiated, but at times were then not accepted by social workers on the grounds that they were not sufficiently safe: There was a real feeling that, certainly on a number of occasions during family group meetings, workers were giving away some power, and that was quite, unsettling in some ways, because it doesn't come naturally.

Higher staff turnover and higher proportions of agency staff.

It is easier now that Cardiff are able to deliver their own 2-day training; this has been positive, both about the opportunities staff have to attend training and/ workshops, and the ways in which they had been able to develop their practice. For some, this came through the chance to be able to reflect on their own practice and take appropriate action to enhance or address deficits; for others, it provided a holistic framework for their work with families, which they reported had previously been absent: “The two-day training changed my practice...and with support and enthusiasm I think it just works very well for families”.

Social workers’ experiences of supervision and support is an important factor, both in relation to developing assessments and writing reports. Colleagues’ supporting Social workers pointed to the importance of practice leads, usually colleagues, who had completed the 5-day training and who had agreed to be ‘SofS champions’.

We have two workshops, surgeries twice a week, coaching sessions and other development sessions. Many said they were mapping cases with colleagues and finding it extremely helpful. Collating the data is complex and much data is collected manually, which can make it very time consuming.

Although social workers identified a great many positives, they were also frustrated with processes and procedures, especially poor recording systems, as well as the limited time they could spend with families. Many social workers said that the need to balance workloads, and by too often settling for what they regarded to be ‘good enough’ practice, they were contributing to inconsistencies in practice. While this is a problem it is not a criticism of the approach. At best, this was seen as part of the process of embedding a different way of working where obstacles needed to be constantly monitored and addressed. At worst, it was viewed as a hazard that could tip the balance too far, if too many social workers were not supported to change how they practised. Perhaps an even bigger challenge identified was maintaining the momentum of the framework with insufficient capacity to meet the demands that were made. As a result, practice leaders reported difficulties in attending sessions designed for them, as well as those they led for colleagues. Some social workers admitted that they had ignored requests from management to take on a role as a champion of SofS, or had been unable to find the additional time to provide oversight and supervision of SofS activities. One of the strengths of SofS was seen to be its ability to be a holistic framework that was flexible and evolving; part of a dynamic, challenging and evolving way of working with families.

Training is an important means for ensuring the wider adoption of innovations across organisations, but this needs to be accompanied by other types of ongoing learning – for example, through practice briefings and team meetings. As the skills and confidence of social workers in using SofS improves, so does their belief it makes a difference to their practice and to the lives of children and families.

Next Steps

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- Implement an IT system that is conducive to the Signs of Safety framework, that will enable the workforce to continue to develop skills to undertake work with children.
- To make it mandatory for the SofS champions to attend monthly meetings and support their team in making sure SofS practice is implemented. For this to take place their caseloads need reflect this.
- SofS champions to be required to engage with training and briefings,
- All team managers to be required to complete the 2 day training and attend briefings so that they are able to guide and encourage staff to work within all aspects of the SofS framework.
- For all the workforce to follow the SofS expectations, not to work in this way would be taken as a performance issue.
- The Practice Lead to host training and briefings in other locations across the council to maximise attendance and awareness raising.
- Liaise with other LAs who have adopted the model; for them to share their learning.
- Identify “ Champions” across other agencies and work together on implementing the model.

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CYNGOR CAERDYDD

CARDIFF COUNCIL

POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 March 2020

Forward Work Programme Update

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an opportunity to agree the provisional work programme for April –July 2020.
2. The Head of Democratic Services has requested each Scrutiny Committee agrees the provisional items proposed for the next four months, as set out in **Appendix 1**.

Way Forward

3. Members to consider the contents of the Forward Work Programme update attached at **Appendix 1**.

Legal Implications

4. 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

5. 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. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

6. The Committee is recommended to consider and agree the provisional agenda items for May-July 2020.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance and Legal Services

4 March 2020

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - DRAFT FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

APRIL – JULY 2020

Meeting Date	Type of Scrutiny	Title and Description of Report	Invitees & Consultees
APRIL 2020		Currently no Scrutiny Meetings Scheduled	
12 MAY 20	Pre-decision	Redevelopment and expansion of Cathays High School	Cllr Sarah Merry, Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills Nick Batchelor, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
	Pre-decision	School Admission Policy	Cllr Sarah Merry, Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills Nick Batchelor, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
	Monitoring Performance & Progress	Directorate Delivery Plan 2020/21 – Education	Cllr Sarah Merry, Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills Nick Batchelor, Director of Education
	Monitoring Performance & Progress	Directorate Delivery Plan 2020/21 – Children Services	Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Cllr Graham Hinchey Claire Marchant, Director – Social Services

Appendix 1

Meeting Date	Type of Scrutiny	Title and Description of Report	Invitees & Consultees
			Deborah Driffield, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services
	Committee Briefing	Ty Storrie To receive an update on the operation of Ty Storrie following the transfer of the short break services to the Council's in-house team	Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Cllr Graham Hinchey Claire Marchant, Director – Social Services Angela Bourge, OM, Strategy Performance and Resources
9 JUNE 20	Pre-decision	Corporate Parenting Strategy	Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Cllr Graham Hinchey Cllr Sarah Merry, Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills Claire Marchant, Director – Social Services Deborah Driffield, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services
	Pre-decision	Cardiff & Vale Carers Strategy	Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Cllr Graham Hinchey Claire Marchant, Director – Social Services Deborah Driffield, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services

Appendix 1

Meeting Date	Type of Scrutiny	Title and Description of Report	Invitees & Consultees
	<p align="center">Committee Briefing</p>	<p>Update on National Categorisation and Estyn Inspections</p>	<p>Cllr Sarah Merry, Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills</p> <p>Nick Batchelor, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning</p>
<p align="center">14 JULY 20</p>	<p align="center">Monitoring Performance & Progress</p>	<p>Quarter 4/1 Performance Report – Children Services</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Cllr Graham Hinchey</p> <p>Claire Marchant, Director – Social Services</p> <p>Deborah Driffield, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services</p>

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