

THE CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL  
GYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 APRIL 2015

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

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REASON FOR THE REPORT

1. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the performance of Children's (social) Services. This report sets out performance data outlining progress against the objectives aligned to the social theme for the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.

BACKGROUND

2. The ongoing development of the Cardiff Performance Management Framework has brought into line the monitoring and evaluation of progress against the key objectives as 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 B** to this report.
3. The Cabinet have identified that the delivery of their key priorities and the Council's performance against key indicators should be the focus of future quarterly reports. Quarterly reports are prepared on that basis, allowing for trend analysis to be undertaken on an appropriate basket of indicators and the effective delivery of the Administration's key priorities as attached at **Appendix A**.
4. The performance report attached at **Appendix B** has been constructed to highlight the progress made in delivering the key objectives, associated performance indicators, and commentaries that help to identify progress, issues and actions planned where the trend in performance is falling. To make the information in the performance report clearer, each indicator is accompanied by an arrow, and in some cases, a happy, indifferent or sad face.
5. For your information, these symbols represent the following:
  - The face symbol shows whether performance is likely, unlikely to, or may meet the target set for the year.
  - The arrow direction shows whether performance has declined, has been sustained or improved when compared with an appropriate previous period.
6. At the meeting officers will be present to explain the performance information to the Committee, to highlight performance issues, and to answer questions that Members might have.

## **PERFORMANCE DURING QUARTER 3: OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2014**

7. Performance is being reported against the following corporate outcomes:

People in Cardiff are safe and feel safe  
People in Cardiff achieve their full potential  
People in Cardiff are healthy  
Cardiff is a fair, just and inclusive society

8. The Service has three main functions:

- a. Promoting the welfare of children in need
- b. Safeguarding children
- c. Improving outcomes for looked after children

## **OVERVIEW OF QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE**

9. During Quarter 3, improvement was achieved in relation to a number of key indicators. For example, there was continued improvement in relation to timeliness of initial assessments with performance rising from 47% in Quarter 2 to 67% in Quarter 3 despite a 5% increase in the number of referrals outcomed for initial assessment (1,028 from 975). Further detail is included in paragraph 20.
10. Performance in relation to the timeliness of core assessments also increased (from 55% during Quarter 2 to 70% in Quarter 3) despite a 24% increase in the number of required core assessments (596 from 482). Performance in December reached 76.8%, just short of the 80% target.
11. Timeliness of initial child protection conferences increased from 86% in Quarter 2 to 93% in Quarter 3 in the context of a 40% increase in the number of required initial child protection conferences (165 from 118).
12. There was also continued improvement in recording of initial care plans for looked after children – performance increased to 81% from 69% in Quarter 2.
13. However, recording of decisions on referrals decreased from 87% in Quarter 2 to 84% in Quarter 3 in the context of an 8% increase in the number of referrals received, and the number of children seen by a social worker during initial assessment decreased from 60% in Quarter 2 to 57% in Quarter 3. Senior managers have initiated an analysis of the reasons for, and risks associated with, this level of performance in relation to children being seen at initial assessment.
14. Work to progress the Directorate's improvement plan has continued:
- a. A draft Prevention Strategy has been developed and will be presented to Members at the April Scrutiny Committee. The potential role of a Social Impact Bond within that Strategy will also be subject to more detailed consideration.
  - b. Further independent audit work has been undertaken and reports received – action plans to address recommendations are in place and being monitored

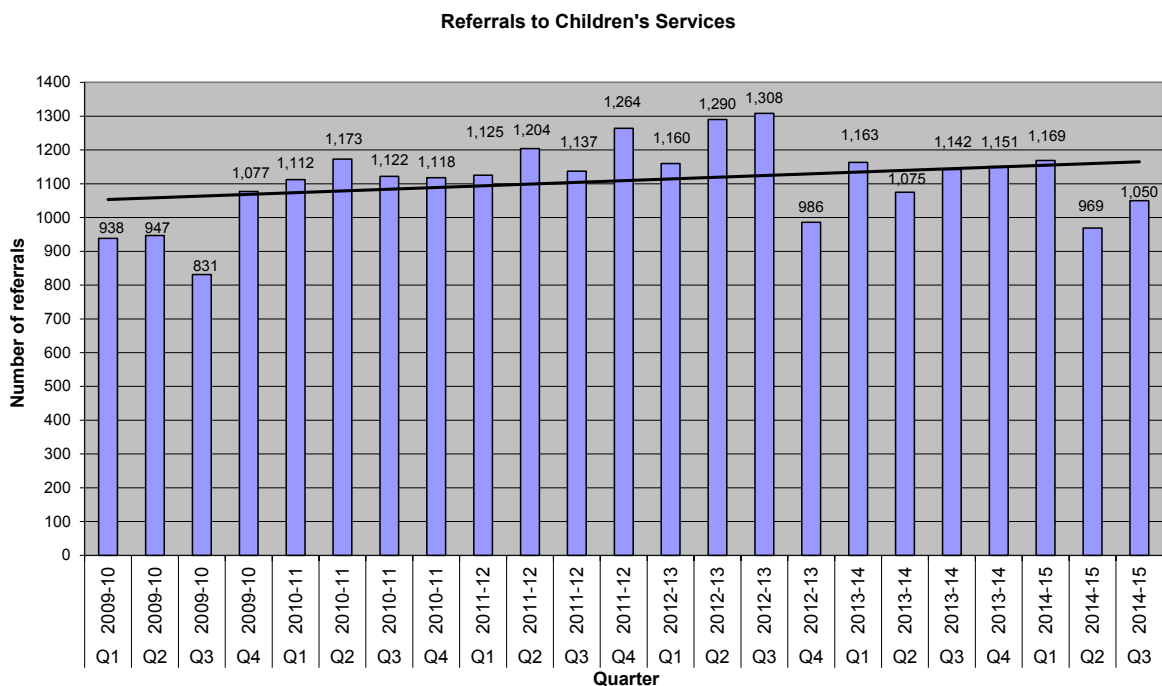
via the Service Improvement Board.

- c. An Exit Strategy for the Managed Team has been agreed on the basis of the additional team withdrawing in mid-April.
- d. A proposal for weekly Legal Surgeries has been agreed between relevant Directors and Legal Surgeries will commence in January.
- e. A Lean review has commenced.

## DETAILED COMMENTARY

### A) PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN NEED

15. Children’s Services received 1,050 referrals in Quarter 3 (Referrals 1) compared with 969 in Quarter 2. In response to the Committee’s request following presentation of the Quarter 2 performance report in December 2014, a detailed breakdown of contacts and referrals is provided at **Appendix C**. This report shows the source of the 7,420 contacts received by Children’s Services during Quarter 3, along with the outcome and a summary of the trend over the last 2 years. Similar information is provided for the 969 referrals received during Quarter 3. The number of referrals to the service continues to be closely monitored (see graph below). The proportion of referrals received that were re-referrals within a year remained static at 25.6%.



16. In relation to the recording of decisions on referrals (SCC/006), the improvement that was evident in Quarter 2 has dropped back slightly from 87.1% (844 / 969) to 83.7% (879 / 1,050) in Quarter 3. This is in the context of an 8% increase in the number of referrals received. The performance report is based on electronic records, but there is evidence that the electronic capture of the information is delayed. However, management oversight confirms all referrals are subject to manager decision and

prioritisation on the day of receipt.

17. Agreement has been reached with the Chief Superintendent to establish a new model for managing referrals and a programme of meetings has been arranged with the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Superintendent to actively progress the development of a new model.
18. Source of referrals – a table summarising the source of referrals to Children's Services during Quarter 3 is included below:

<b>Source of Referrals</b>	<b>Q3</b>
Ambulance Service	0
Central Government Agency	0
Family, Friend or Neighbour	27
Housing	0
Independent Provider Agency	0
LA Housing Dept. or Housing Association	23
Local Authority's own Social Services Department	106
Other Agency	130
Other Departments of Own or Other LA	50
Other Individual	14
Other Social Services Department	0
Other Type	0
Police	272
Primary Health / Community Health	125
Probation Service	45
School	207
Secondary Health	48
Self Referral	1
UK Border Agency	2
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1,050</u></b>

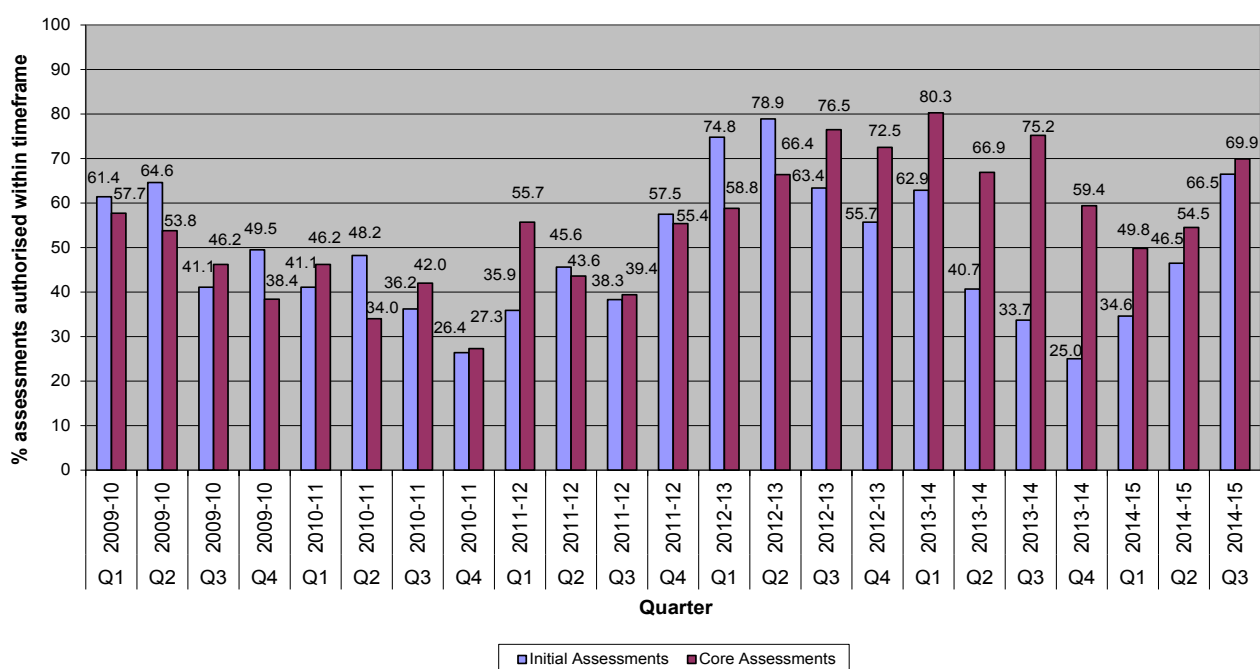
19. Outcome of referrals – 92.5% (971 / 1,050) of referrals were allocated to a social worker for initial assessment in Quarter 3 compared with 97.0% (940 / 969) in Quarter 2 (SCC/007a). 5.4% (57 / 1,050) of referrals were allocated to other grades of worker for initial assessment compared with 3.6% (35 / 969) in Quarter 2. 3.0% (32 / 1,050) of referrals did not proceed to assessment during the quarter. In these cases, referrers were signposted to other agencies, given advice or information, or the referrals were closed with no further action. As noted in previous reports, while we have improved the management of the front door and determining what contacts should become referrals, we are also seeing an increase in the complexity of the cases that stay open to Children's Services.
20. Improvements made in relation to the timeliness of initial assessments in Quarter 2 have been sustained and performance in Quarter 3 improved to 66.5% (654 / 983) from 46.5% (537 / 1,155) in Quarter 2 (SCC/042a). Although performance increased during the quarter, improvements were not at the rate anticipated. Following an increase to 75% in October, timeliness fell back to 62% in November and December as a result of a change to the I&A structure. A four-team I&A structure has been introduced and it is anticipated that further improvement will be evident in Quarter 4 now that the structure has become embedded.

21. The Children's Services Improvement Plan continues to be supported by external audit capacity provided through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Further independent audit work has been undertaken and reports received – action plans to address recommendations are in place and being monitored via the Service Improvement Board.
22. 56.5% (555 / 983) of children were seen by a social worker during their initial assessment compared with 59.6% (688 / 1,155) in Quarter 2 (SCC/011a). Inclusion of children seen by a Children's Services worker other than a social worker increases the percentage of children seen to 60.4% (594 / 983). Senior managers have initiated an analysis of the reasons for, and risks associated with, this level of performance.
23. The percentage of initial assessments where information regarding ethnicity, religion and first language were recorded during Quarter 3 is as follows:
  - a. Ethnicity – 74.0% (727 / 983)
  - b. Religion – 37.4% (368 / 983)
  - c. First language – 58.7% (577 / 983)

A detailed breakdown of the ethnicities, religions and first languages of children and young people who were subject to an initial assessment during Quarter 3 is available on request.

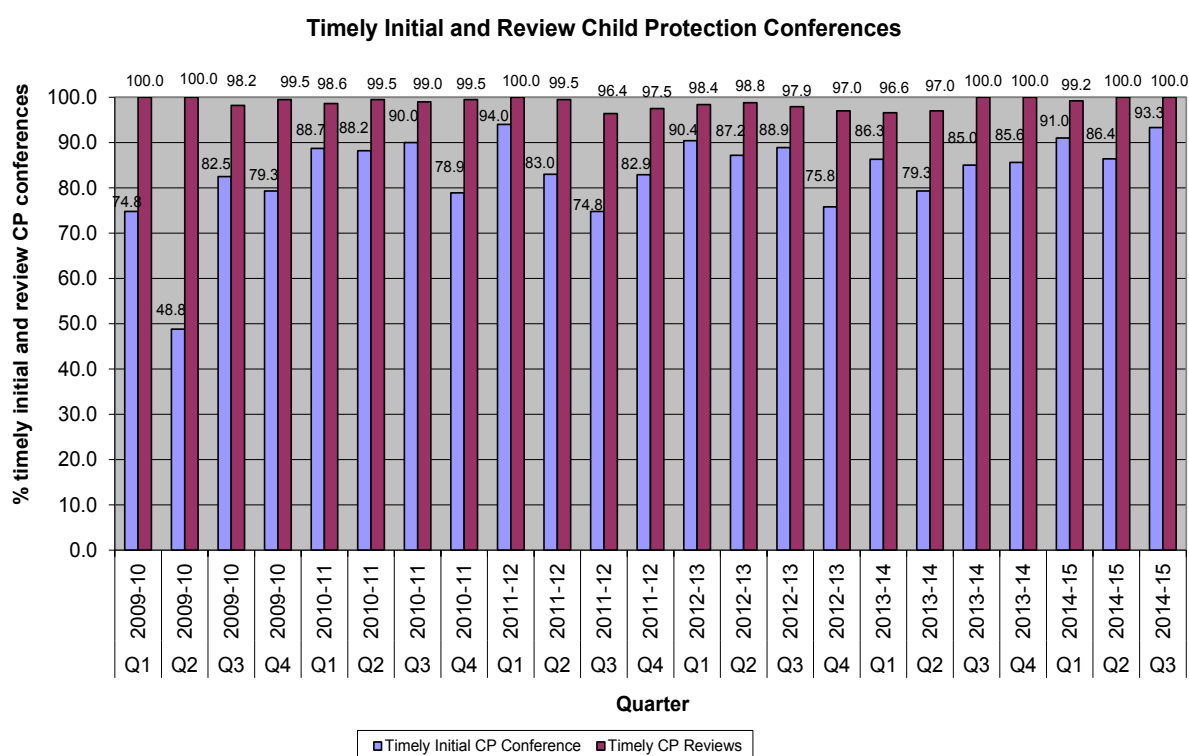
24. Performance in relation to timely completion of core assessments improved to 69.9% (438 / 627) in Quarter 3 compared with 54.5% (337 / 618) in Quarter 2 (SCC/043a). This improvement is in the context of a 24% increase in the number of required core assessments (596 from 482). Performance in December reached 76.8%, just short of the 80% target. A graph displaying timely completion of (initial and) core assessments is included below.

**Timely Initial and Core Assessments**



## B) SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

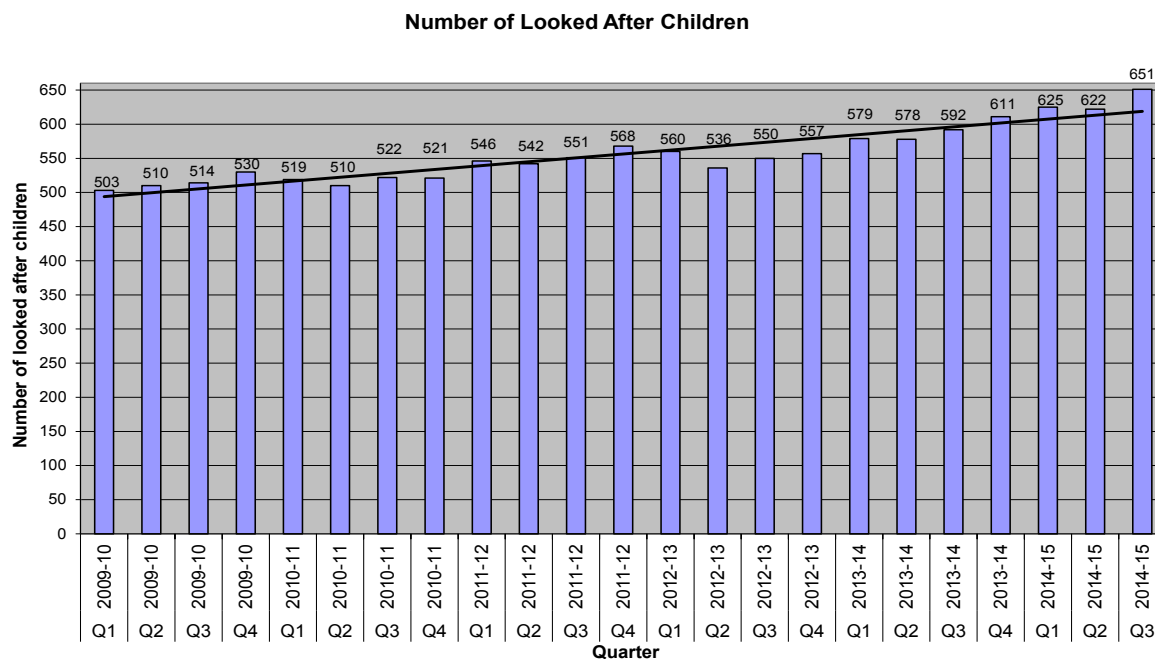
25. The number of children on the child protection register at the end of Quarter 3 was 297 (from 294 at the end of Quarter 2) (CS CPR 4).
26. 93.3% (154 / 164) of initial child protection conferences took place within the 15 working day timescale in Quarter 3 compared with 86.4% (102 / 118) in Quarter 2 (SCC/014). Performance has improved in Quarter 3 in the context of a 40% increase in the number of required initial child protection conferences (165 from 118).
27. Timeliness of review child protection conferences remained at 100.0% (237 / 237) in Quarter 3 in the context of a 23% reduction in the number of required conferences (237 from 309 in Quarter 2). Performance against initial and review child protection conferences is displayed in the graph below:



28. Initial core groups took place within the 10 working day timescale in 95.5% (127 / 133) of cases in Quarter 3 compared with 94.8% (92 / 97) in Quarter 2 (SCC/015). This slight improvement is in the context of a 37% increase in the number of required initial core groups (133 from 97).
29. 100% (297 / 297) of children on the child protection register had an allocated social worker at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.
30. The newly integrated Safeguarding Unit became operational. The Unit co-locates safeguarding teams from Education, Health & Social Care (POVA) and Children's Services (Independent Review and Case Conference Chairs). Safeguarding Business Support staff from Children's Services, Health & Social Care and POVA Co-ordinators have also transferred to the Unit.

## C) IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

31. The number of children who were looked after at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 (not including those children being looked after as part of a respite care arrangement) increased by 5% to 651 from 622 at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 (CS LAC 3e). This represents a rate of 9.1 children per 1,000 in Cardiff, which is the same as the all Wales rate as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. The recent fluctuations in the number of looked after children are displayed in the graph below.



32. Initial care plans were in place prior to children becoming looked after in 81.2% (82 / 101) of cases during Quarter 3, compared with 69.4% (50 / 72) in Quarter 2 (SCC/001a). Performance against this indicator has improved in Quarter 3 following the introduction in September of a new process designed to simplify the system and reduce the burden on staff. This improvement occurred despite a 40% increase in the number of children starting to be looked after (72 to 101).
33. 81.8% (45 / 55) of permanence plans were in place by second looked after review in Quarter 3, compared with 72.5% (37 / 51) in Quarter 2 (SCC/001b).
34. 71.3% (367 / 515) of looked after children were placed with independent sector providers at the end of Quarter 3 (CS LAC 44), remaining static from Quarter 2 71.3% (351 / 492). The number of children placed in independent sector residential placements increased to 59 from 55 at the end of Quarter 2.
35. 61.4% (316 / 515) of children in regulated placements were placed in Cardiff at the end of Quarter 3 compared with 62.2% (306 / 492) at the end of Quarter 2 (CS LAC 58). A further 93 children placed outside Cardiff were within 20 miles of their home address. 1 of the children not placed in Cardiff is placed with a relative carer. For some children placement outside the authority is in their best interests, examples include children placed with family members who live outside Cardiff, children placed in specialist placements and some children who are placed in areas that are closer to their home address than some parts of the city.

36. 87.7% (429 / 489) of statutory reviews for looked after children were held within prescribed timescales in Quarter 3 compared with 82.9% (310 / 374) in Quarter 2 (SCC/021). 87.9% (430 / 489) of statutory visits were held in accordance with regulations in Quarter 3 compared with 89.0% (333 / 374) in Quarter 2 (SCC/025).
37. All looked after children were allocated to a social worker at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.

## **YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE**

38. The numbers of First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) has decreased during Quarter 3 to 32 (from 37 in Quarter 2).
39. The self-assessment audit on recording in line with National Standards went well with YOS scoring highly throughout the assessment - 82% being the lowest score. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has chosen not to undertake a full validation of our results but have sought clarification on one or two points.
40. The re-offending toolkit has been in use since Quarter 2. The YJB is using past year's data for analysis purposes and will be making recommendations based on their findings. Comparative data is expected to be available in Quarter 4.
41. The Youth Offending Service developed and implemented an improvement plan following dialogue with the Youth Justice Board - all action points have been implemented, including the work on re-offending and the use of the toolkit that is ongoing.

## **STAFFING**

42. The percentage of social worker vacancies in Quarter 3 was 25.3% compared with 28.6% in Quarter 2 (Staff 1). The vacancy position has improved slightly during the quarter as appointed social workers have taken up post. The apparent high percentage of vacancies must be treated with caution because the percentage was inflated by the creation of new posts as part of the realignment of Children's Services. Recruitment is ongoing - the recruitment campaign this year has been very successful and has directly contributed to the service's ability to retain social workers. We are now attracting numbers of applications from agency staff who have been working within the service, and social workers from other local authorities.
43. The impact of the Managed Team being allocated 220 cases to date has enabled the service to reduce the overall number of cases from 2,953 at 30.06.14 to 2,504 at 31.12.14, bringing social worker caseloads in Children's Services teams down from 24.5 at 30.06.14 to 18.4 at 31.12.14. An Exit Strategy for the Managed Team has been agreed on the basis of the additional team withdrawing in mid-April.
44. The percentage sickness for Children's Services in Quarter 3 was 4.8% (1,026.5 / 21,250.2) compared with 6.9% (1,452.0 / 20,970.7) in Quarter 2. Sickness levels continue to be closely monitored to ensure that appropriate action is taken to manage sickness absence across the service area.
45. 86% compliance with finalisation of objective sheets and 81.6% compliance with 6 monthly reviews had been achieved at the time of writing. A small percentage cannot be initiated / reviewed due to staff absence (e.g. maternity leave and long term sick



leave), and a high level of recruitment activity and new intake accounts for a proportion of the outstanding PPDRs. Work to initiate and review the remaining PPDRs continues.

## **WAY FORWARD**

46. Members are invited to consider the information set out in the report and to identify any issues which require more detailed scrutiny.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

47. 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 Executive / Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf 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 of 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**

48. 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 Executive / Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to:  
Consider the contents of the report and report any comments to the Cabinet Member.

**Tony Young**  
**Director of Children's Services**  
**30<sup>th</sup> March 2015**