

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 MAY 2016

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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 March 2016.

BACKGROUND

2. 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**.
3. 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.
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.

7. In total Children's Services have 47 national performance indicators, of which the Welsh Government have identified 11 as wither National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) or Performance Accountability Measures (PAMs). Where relevant, the narrative in the report that follows indicates the status of an NSI or PAM indicator.

## **PERFORMANCE DURING QUARTER 4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2016**

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

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

9. 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 4 PERFORMANCE**

10. While there has been some continued progress in Quarter 4, there has also been slippage in some areas in the context of increasing referrals and overall caseload numbers.
11. For example, recording of decisions on referrals decreased from 88% in Quarter 3 to 87% in Quarter 4. Timely completion of initial assessments decreased from 83% in Quarter 3 to 69% in Quarter 4. Despite this decrease, there was a steady improvement in performance throughout Quarter 4 (from 57% in January to 87% in March). The 80% target was met for March, although the full year figure falls just short of this at 77%. This, however, is a significant improvement on the 51% outturn for 2014-15. There was also a decrease in the percentage of children who were seen by a social worker during their initial assessment (PAM) – from 58% in Quarter 3 to 54% in Quarter 4.
12. Timeliness of initial child protection conferences decreased from 93% to 91%, but the 92% target was met for the year. There was also a decrease in the timeliness of initial core groups from 98% to 91%, although the 93% target was met for the year.
13. There was further improvement in relation to timeliness of core assessments with performance reaching 83% for Quarter 4 (from 79% in Quarter 3). This is the first time that quarterly performance has exceeded the 80% target time since Quarter 1 2013-14.
14. There was an improvement in the recording of initial care plans for looked after children - 89% from 78% in Quarter 3.

15. Work to progress the Directorate's business plan has continued and key areas of progress include:
- a. **Early Help Strategy** - the Strategy was launched during Quarter 3 and is being implemented. The following developments have been made during the quarter:
    - Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) pilot progressing; Family Plan template finalised; JAFF Training DVD commissioned to assist practitioners undertake the assessment.
    - Review of Family Intervention Support Service (FISS) capacity being undertaken following ongoing success of rapid response project.
    - Adolescent Resource Centre – premises secured, post creation commenced; model for psychology input agreed with Health.
  - b. **Gateway Database** - single gateway for young people aged 16 or above to access direct housing, advice and support went live in Quarter 3. The Gateway has been a very positive development for young people needing to access accommodation and for the staff supporting them to do so. The process is very accessible and has reduced the anxiety for young people. It has strengthened relationships across the Directorates and is enabling the Looked After Children Service to respond to the requirements of young people and to work together to develop appropriate resources that meet need.
  - c. **Remodelling of Children's Services** - meetings are underway with a Signs of Safety training provider to plan the delivery of training. The Risk Assessment Framework has been agreed and will be implemented in Quarter 1 2016-17. Evaluation of OM roles has been completed and discussions with Trade Unions are underway prior to proceeding with the re-structure. Subject to agreement being reached with Trade Unions, it is anticipated that OM appointments will be completed by end of Quarter 1 2016-17.
16. There has been some slippage in progress against some of the milestones in the Corporate Plan relating to the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy, implementation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and work with Education to improve educational outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.
- a. **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy** - the Cardiff Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy was approved by the Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Children Board in its role as the statutory body to which all agencies are accountable and this has provided the basis for Directorate and partner activity both in developing a strategic response to CSE and in ensuring effective operational interventions when necessary. More broadly the Directorate has been working very actively with South Wales Police as the key lead agency in relation to CSE overall and this strong local relationship in Cardiff is reflected both in the Strategy and in joint operations on the ground. A full programme of training has been planned for partner agencies and other groups, and awareness raising sessions are underway. A briefing to informal Cabinet is being arranged in the near future which will demonstrate significant progress over the last 12 months.
  - b. **Implementation of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** - governance arrangements, operating model, staff composition, ICT infrastructure and

accommodation (Cardiff Bay Police Station) agreed. Information sharing protocol under development. Vetting process for staff almost complete. Process mapping for referral pathways completed. On target for launch at the end of Quarter 1 2016-17.

- c. **Work with Education to improve educational outcomes for looked after children and care leavers** - following concerns raised in Quarter 2, and the introduction of information for managers to enable proactive monitoring of PEPs, there are some signs of improvement at the time of writing. Operational Managers for relevant services are continuing to re-enforce the need to ensure that staff give high priority to completing the PEP when children become looked after.

17. There has also been some slippage in progress against some of the milestones in the Children's Services Plan relating to:

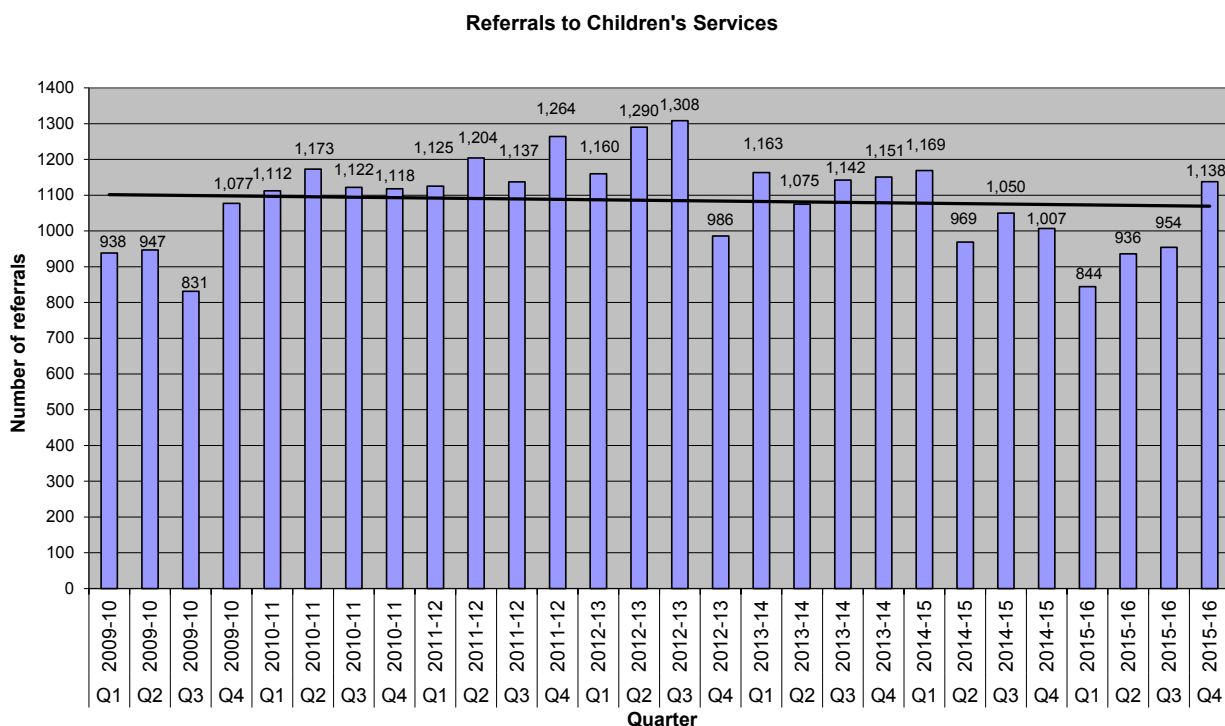
- a. **Improving the quality of referrals** - the review of the Multi-Agency Referral Form planned for Quarter 2 was integrated with work being undertaken in relation to the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act. Required amendments have been made and the form is to be agreed collectively by colleagues in Education, Probation, Police and Health in readiness for use in 2016-17.
- b. **Safeguarding monitoring requirements** - work on the development of a suite of performance measures and reporting mechanisms that cover the broad range of work undertaken by the safeguarding and review unit has been undertaken and it is anticipated that this work will be concluded in Quarter 1 2016-17.
- c. **YOS** - progress in relation to YOS governance has been made and plans are in place to address membership, contents of meetings, presentation of performance information and financial information which will accord with recommendations made by the Police and Crime Commissioner's commissioned report and the YOS inspection report. YOS Management Board to facilitate workshops to address governance issues. Achievement of the planned YOS restructure has been deferred to 2016-17.
- d. **Corporate Parenting Strategy** - will be considered by Cabinet in Quarter 1 and the launch will follow shortly after.
- e. **Re-commissioning of the Supervised Contact Service** - contract awarded – service to be implemented in Quarter 1 2016-17.
- f. **Enhanced Fostering Scheme** - plan in place to address financial implications. Engagement with alternative provider and three promising models proposed (currently being considered by Children's Management Team). Work undertaken with Legal and Procurement to terminate current contract and put in place a new contract for an individual placement for the one young person who was placed within the scheme and remains in placement.
- g. **Welsh bilingual service** - operational pressures have made the completion of the Linguistic Assessments more difficult. 21 assessments have been returned to date and reminders issued regarding the outstanding assessments.

- h. **Savings** - the month 11 position for Children's Services shows a projected overspend of £1.750m. Despite a reduction in the number of looked after children during the year (from a high of 662 in June 2015 to 644 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016) the commissioning mix for placements has become more costly. This is because there has been an increase in the proportion of children presenting extremely complex challenges who need externally purchased placements with very high support ratios. In spite of this however, there is also a significant shortfall (£1.1m) against the £2.7m savings target set for the service as part of the 2015-16 budget which is attributable principally to the failure of a provider to deliver services in support of a new Payment by Results initiative. Nevertheless, there has been a continued focus on returning children placed in high cost out of area placements to Cardiff that has been successful in returning 7 children to Cardiff at an estimated saving of £316,000.
- i. **Quality Assurance Framework** - a Quality Assurance Officer has been appointed and the implementation of the Framework is planned for Quarter 1 2016-17.

## DETAILED COMMENTARY

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

18. Children's Services received 1,138 referrals in Quarter 4 (Referrals 1) compared with 954 in Quarter 3. A detailed breakdown of contacts and referrals is provided at **Appendix C1 & 2** for the Committee's information. This report shows the source of the 7,960 contacts received by Children's Services during Quarter 4, along with the outcome and a summary of the trend over the last 2 years. Similar information is provided for the 1,138 referrals received during Quarter 4. 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 (SCC/010) reduced to 23.4% from 24.3% in Quarter 3.



19. In relation to the recording of decisions on referrals (SCC/006), performance declined slightly in Quarter 4 to 86.5% (984 / 1,138) from 88.2% (841 / 954) in Quarter 3. This in the context of a sustained high number of contacts to the service (7,960 compared

with 7,280 in Quarter 2) and capacity issues at Intake & Assessment (I&A) in the early part of the quarter. The performance report is based on electronic records, but there is evidence that the electronic capture of the information is delayed. There were particular issues in Quarter 4 where a number of days access to electronic systems were lost due to ICT issues. However, management oversight confirms all referrals are subject to manager decision and prioritisation on the day of receipt.

20. There has been further progress during Quarter 4 towards the implementation of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Please see pages 3-4 for further information. Next steps are:

- Complete vetting process,
- Finalise Information Sharing Protocol.
- Implement revised Multi Agency Referral Form.
- Implement MHub.
- Review delivery plan

21. Source of referrals – a table summarising the source of referrals to Children’s Services during Quarter 4 is included below:

<b>Source of Referrals</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Ambulance Service	0
Central Government Agency	2
Family, Friend or Neighbour	66
Housing	0
Independent Provider Agency	0
LA Housing Dept. or Housing Association	17
Local Authority's own Social Services Department	99
Other Agency	131
Other Departments of Own or Other LA	82
Other Individual	7
Other Social Services Department	0
Other Type	0
Police	279
Primary Health / Community Health	174
Probation Service	46
School	226
Secondary Health	7
Self Referral	1
UK Border Agency	1
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1,138</u></b>

22. Outcome of referrals – 87.3% (994 / 1,138) of referrals were allocated to a social worker for initial assessment in Quarter 4 compared with 93.6% (893 / 954) in Quarter 3 (SCC/007a). 8.4% (96 / 1,138) of referrals were allocated to other grades of worker for initial assessment compared with 3.4% (32 / 954) in Quarter 3. 4.7% (54 / 1,138) 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.

23. Performance in relation to the timeliness of initial assessments declined in Quarter 4 to 69.4% (729 / 1,050) from 83.2% (691 / 831) in Quarter 3 (SCC/042a). Following a decline in performance in Quarter 3 as a result of capacity issues at Intake & Assessment, recruitment of agency staff in Quarter 4 has helped the service get back on track. There was a steady improvement in performance throughout Quarter 4 (from 57% in January to 87% in March). The 80% target was met for March, although the full year figure falls just short of this at 77%. This, however, is a significant improvement on the 51% outturn for 2014-15.
24. 53.7% (564 / 1,050) of children were seen by a social worker during their initial assessment compared with 58.0% (482 / 831) in Quarter 3 (SCC/011a – PAM). Inclusion of children seen by a Children's Services worker other than a social worker increases the percentage of children seen to 61.2% (643 / 1,050). 28.4% (298 / 1,050) children were seen alone by a social worker during their initial assessment (SCC/011b – NSI), compared with 30.7% (255 / 831) in Quarter 3. There has been a significant drive in empowering social workers and managers to undertake the most appropriate assessment at the point of referral. This has led to a range of outcomes including initial assessments:
- Proceeding straight to child protection investigations / core assessment / specialist assessments.
  - Being closed with no further action after receiving managers have re-evaluated the decision to proceed to initial assessment.

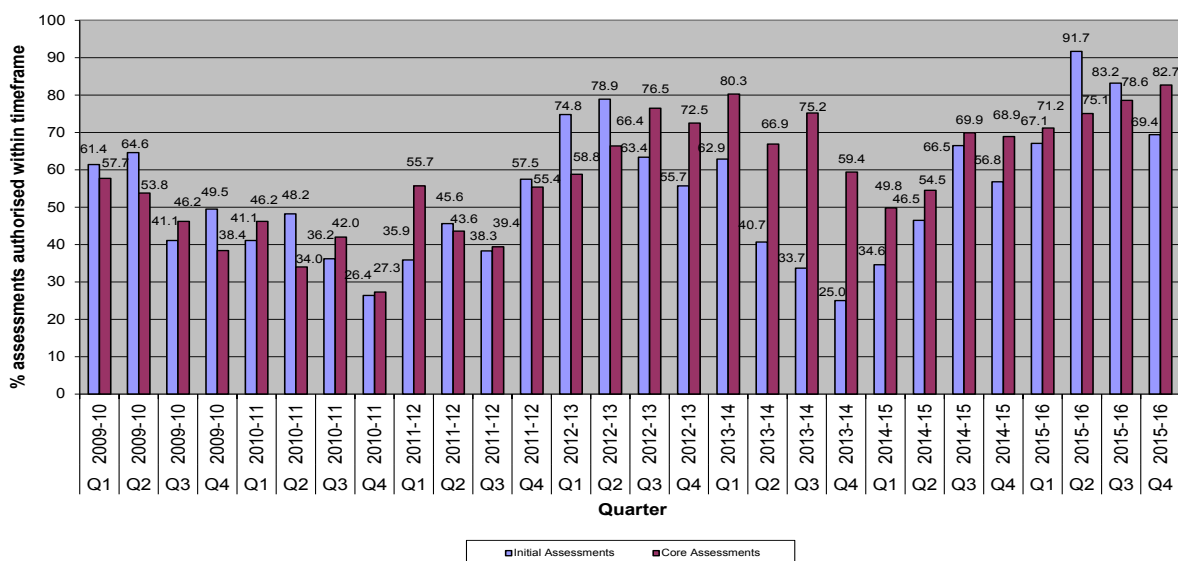
In these circumstances a full initial assessment would not have been completed - a more appropriate assessment would have been undertaken and the child seen as part of that assessment. This is commensurate with the new Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 wherein a proportionate assessment will be undertaken following all referrals. The 80% target set by the ADSS, WLGA and CSSIW pre-dates this new approach which is consistent with the direction of travel across the country.

25. The percentage of initial assessments where information regarding ethnicity, religion and first language were recorded during Quarter 3 is as follows:
- a. Ethnicity – 62.0% (651 / 1,050)
  - b. Religion – 33.3% (350 / 1,050)
  - c. First language – 51.3% (539 / 1,050)

A detailed breakdown of the ethnicities, religions and first languages of children and young people who were subject to an initial assessment during Quarter 4 is available on request.

26. Performance in relation to timely completion of core assessments was 82.7% (354 / 428) in Quarter 4 compared with 78.6% (319 / 406) in Quarter 3 (SCC/043a). Performance against this indicator continued to improve in Quarter 4 with quarterly performance exceeding the 80% target for the first time since Quarter 1 2013-14. A graph displaying timely completion of (initial and) core assessments is below:

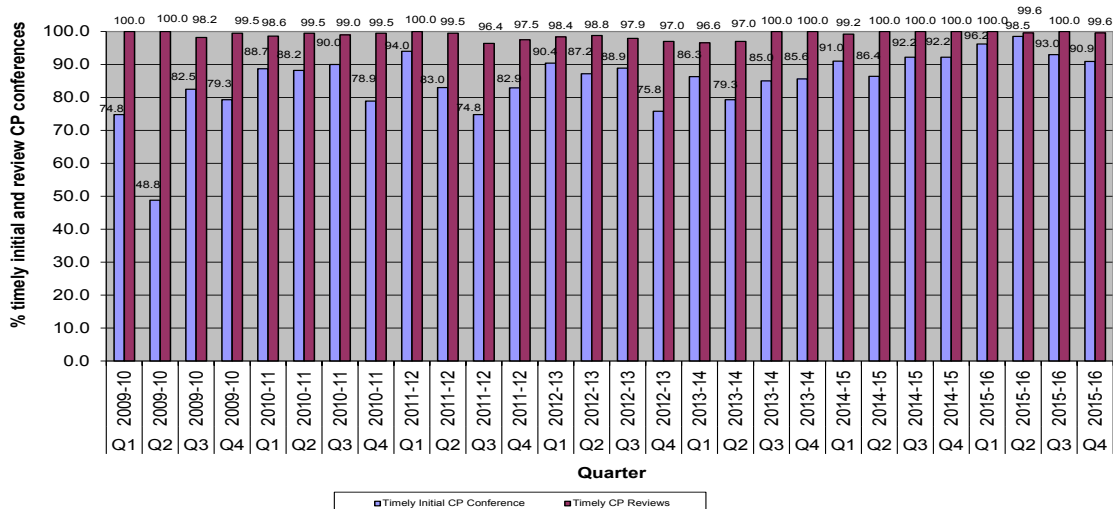
**Timely Initial and Core Assessments**



**B) SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

- 27. The number of children on the child protection register at the end of Quarter 4 was 342 (from 311 at the end of Quarter 3) (CS CPR 4).
- 28. 90.9% (159 / 175) of initial child protection conferences took place within the 15 working day timescale in Quarter 4 – from 93.0% (106 / 114) in Quarter 3 (SCC/014). Performance has dropped slightly in Quarter 4 in the context of a 54% increase in the number of required initial conferences (175 compared with 114 in Quarter 3). 11 conferences were late in January relating to 2 sibling groups. One conference was late because the interpreter did not attend, so had to be rescheduled. The other was due to human error. 5 conferences relating to 1 sibling group were late in March due to human error. All conferences have since been held.
- 29. Timeliness of review child protection conferences was 99.6% (252 / 253) in Quarter 4 compared with 100% (282 / 282) in Quarter 3. Performance against initial and review child protection conferences is displayed in the graph below:

**Timely Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences**

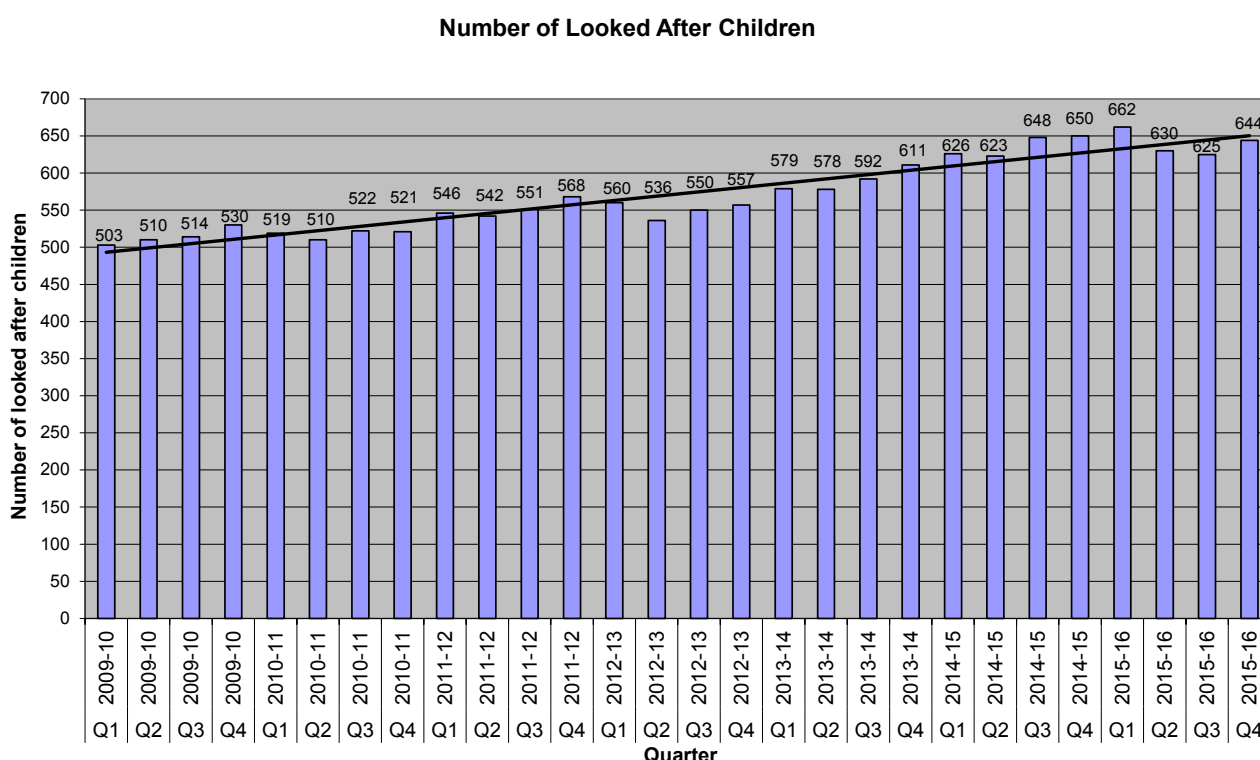




30. Initial core groups took place within the 10 working day timescale in 90.7% (127 / 140) of cases in Quarter 4 compared with 98.4% (127 / 129) in Quarter 2 (SCC/015). Performance reduced in Quarter 4 in the context of a 9% increase in the number of required initial core groups (140 compared with 129 in Quarter 3), although the 93% target was met for the year.
31. 100% (342 / 342) of children on the child protection register had an allocated social worker at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
32. The Cardiff Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy was approved by the Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Children Board in its role as the statutory body to which all agencies are accountable and this has provided the basis for Directorate and partner activity both in developing a strategic response to CSE and in ensuring effective operational interventions when necessary. More broadly the Directorate has been working very actively with South Wales Police as the key lead agency in relation to CSE overall and this strong local relationship in Cardiff is reflected both in the Strategy and in joint operations on the ground. A full programme of training has been planned for partner agencies and other groups, and awareness raising sessions are underway. A briefing to informal Cabinet is being arranged in the near future which will demonstrate significant progress over the last 12 months.

### C) IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

33. The number of children who were looked after at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 (not including those children being looked after as part of a respite care arrangement) was 644 compared with 625 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 (CS LAC 3e). This represents a rate of 8.8 children per 1,000 in Cardiff, which is lower than the all Wales rate of 9.1 per 1,000 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. The recent fluctuation in the number of looked after children is displayed in the graph below.



34. Initial care plans were in place prior to children becoming looked after in 88.7% (63 / 71) of cases during Quarter 4, compared with 78.1% (50 / 64) in Quarter 3 (SCC/001a). Performance against this indicator improved during the quarter and is now above the threshold for manager intervention.
35. 88.1% (37 / 42) of permanence plans were in place by second looked after review in Quarter 4, compared with 96.3% (52 / 54) in Quarter 3 (SCC/001b) meeting the 87% target for both the quarter and the year.
36. 72.0% (363 / 504) of looked after children were placed with independent sector providers at the end of Quarter 4 (CS LAC 44), an increase from 70.0% (340 / 486) in Quarter 3. The number of children placed in independent sector residential placements has reduced to 50 from 55 at the end of Quarter 3.
37. 62.5% (315 / 504) of children in regulated placements were placed in Cardiff at the end of Quarter 4 compared with 60.9% (296 / 486) at the end of Quarter 3 (CS LAC 58). A further 83 children placed outside Cardiff were within 20 miles of their home address. 3 of the children not placed in Cardiff are placed with relative carers. 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.
38. 92.7% (395 / 426) of statutory reviews for looked after children were held within prescribed timescales in Quarter 4 compared with 95.9% (397 / 414) in Quarter 3 (SCC/021). 91.1% (388 / 426) of statutory visits were held in accordance with regulations in Quarter 4 showing an increase from 85.3% (353 / 414) in Quarter 3 (SCC/025 – PAM).
39. 99.8% (631 / 632) looked after children were allocated to a social worker at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The one case that was not has since been allocated.

## **YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE**

40. The numbers of First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) has increased during Quarter 4 to 38 (from 29 in Quarter 3) primarily as a result of an increase in motoring offences. This is also an increase on Quarter 4 2014-15 when there were 21 FTEs.
41. Relevant staff continue to attend the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) training on Child Sexual Exploitation.
42. Progress in relation to YOS governance has been made and plans are in place to address membership, contents of meetings, presentation of performance information and financial information which will accord with recommendations made by the Police and Crime Commissioner's commissioned report and the YOS inspection report. YOS Management Board to facilitate workshops to address governance issues. Achievement of the planned YOS restructure has been deferred to 2016-17.

## **STAFFING**

43. The percentage of social worker vacancies in Quarter 4 was 22.2% compared with 21.6% in Quarter 3 (Staff 1). The vacancy position has remained reasonably stable in Quarter 4, although there has been a small increase in vacancies in the Looked After Children Service. The recruitment campaign is ongoing and an agreement is in place that when all vacancies have been filled, Children's Services will continue to recruit to a "pool" of additional social workers. This will enable the service to maintain consistency of service provision and caseloads whilst managing healthy staff turnover without needing to rely on expensive agency social workers. The ambitious 15% target has been revised to 18% for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. The Children's Services Workforce Strategy has been agreed, but is being revised to capitalise on messages in the inspection report and to profile the benefits of mobilisation. A plan is in place for engagement with Adult Services with a view to developing a Social Services Workforce Strategy in 2016-17.
44. The average number of days of sickness absence for staff in Children's Services in 2015-16 was 13.8, compared with 13.9 in 2014-15. In order to improve compliance with the sickness process in Children's Services, progress will continue to be closely monitored on a weekly basis at the Children's Management Team and in addition, Operational Managers will work closely with a Human Resources representative who will assist in the monitoring of the process.
45. 88.0% compliance with finalisation of objective sheets and 76% compliance with completion of half yearly reviews for 2015-16 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. In order to improve compliance in Children's Services, all Operational Managers are monitoring the completion of PPDRs for 2015-16 and the initiation of objectives for 2016-17. A template has been created for managers that informs the development of consistent objectives in Social Services and give staff a clear line of sight to the Corporate Plan and Directorate outcomes.

## **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 Cabinet / 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 Cabinet / 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 Social Services**  
**11 May 2016**