

Children's Services Performance Report

Quarter 3 2023/24

Our Vision

Children in Cardiff are provided with the right support, from the right person at the right time, in the right place and at the lowest safe level of intervention, enabling them to remain with their family where it is safe for them to do so and achieve their full potential.

#KeepingFamiliesTogether



**STRONGER
FAIRER
GREENER**

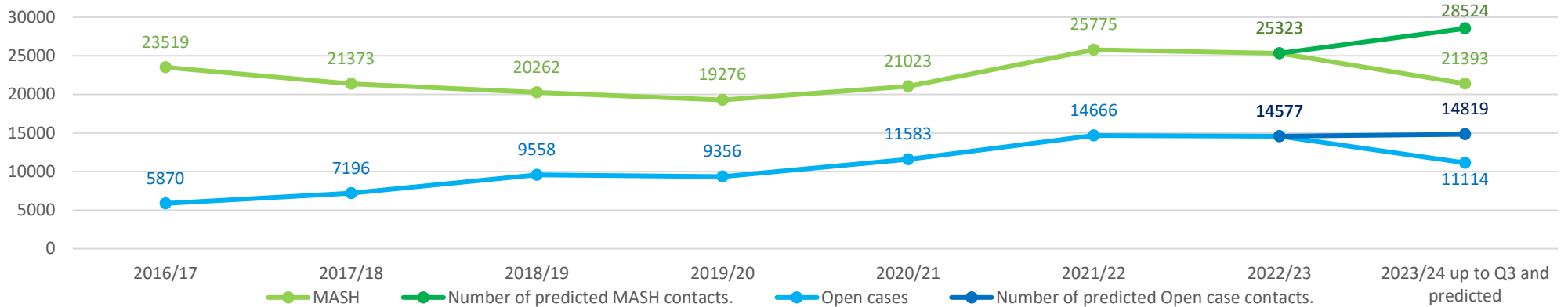


#GweithioDrosGaerdydd
#GweithioDrosochChi

#WorkingForCardiff
#WorkingForYou

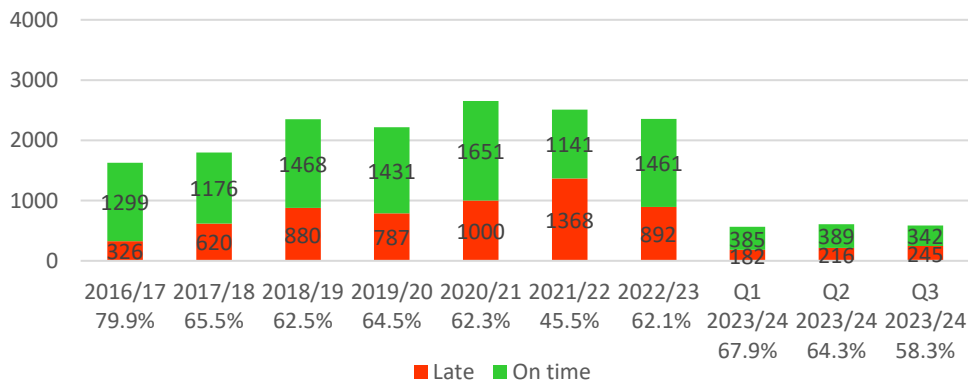
Demand

Contact / Referrals to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and on Open Cases



The graph above shows the increase in contacts / referrals to Children’s Services since 2019/20, peaking during 2021/22. Although lower than 2021/22, the number of contacts and referrals remained high and the pressures on the service continued during 2022/23. The change in trend since 2016/17 is due to the agreement that all safeguarding concerns on open cases need to be referred via the front door. During Quarter 3 2023/24 MASH received 6,710 contacts compared to 6,592 during Quarter 3 last year. Similarly, contacts on open cases have increased to 4,227 during Quarter 3 compared to 3,441 during Quarter 3 last year. Based on these figures the predicted contacts for the year are shown in the graph above and are projected to exceed last year’s volume and that of 2021/22.

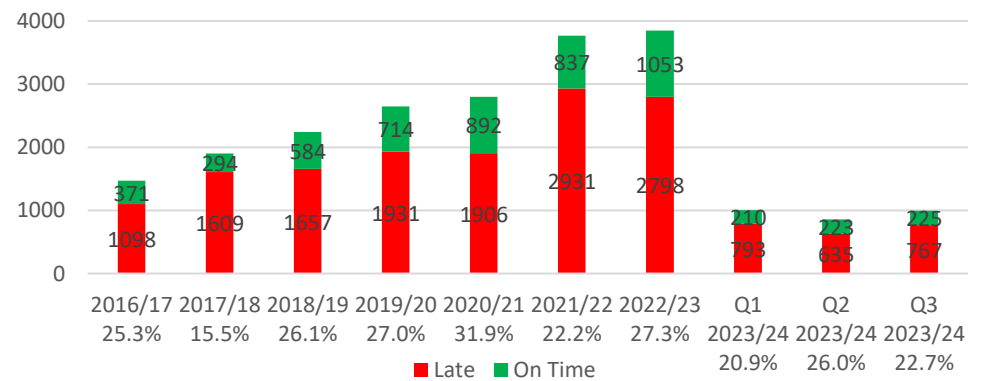
Well-being Assessments



58.3% (342 / 587) of well-being assessments were completed within 42 working days during Quarter 3 2023/24 compared to 64.3% (389 / 605) during Quarter 2.

Well-being assessments were an average 27 working days overdue compared to 22 working days in Quarter 2 2023/24.

Section 47 Assessments



22.7% (225 / 992) of Section 47s were completed within 10 working days during Quarter 3 2023/24 compared with 26.0% (223 / 858) in Quarter 2.

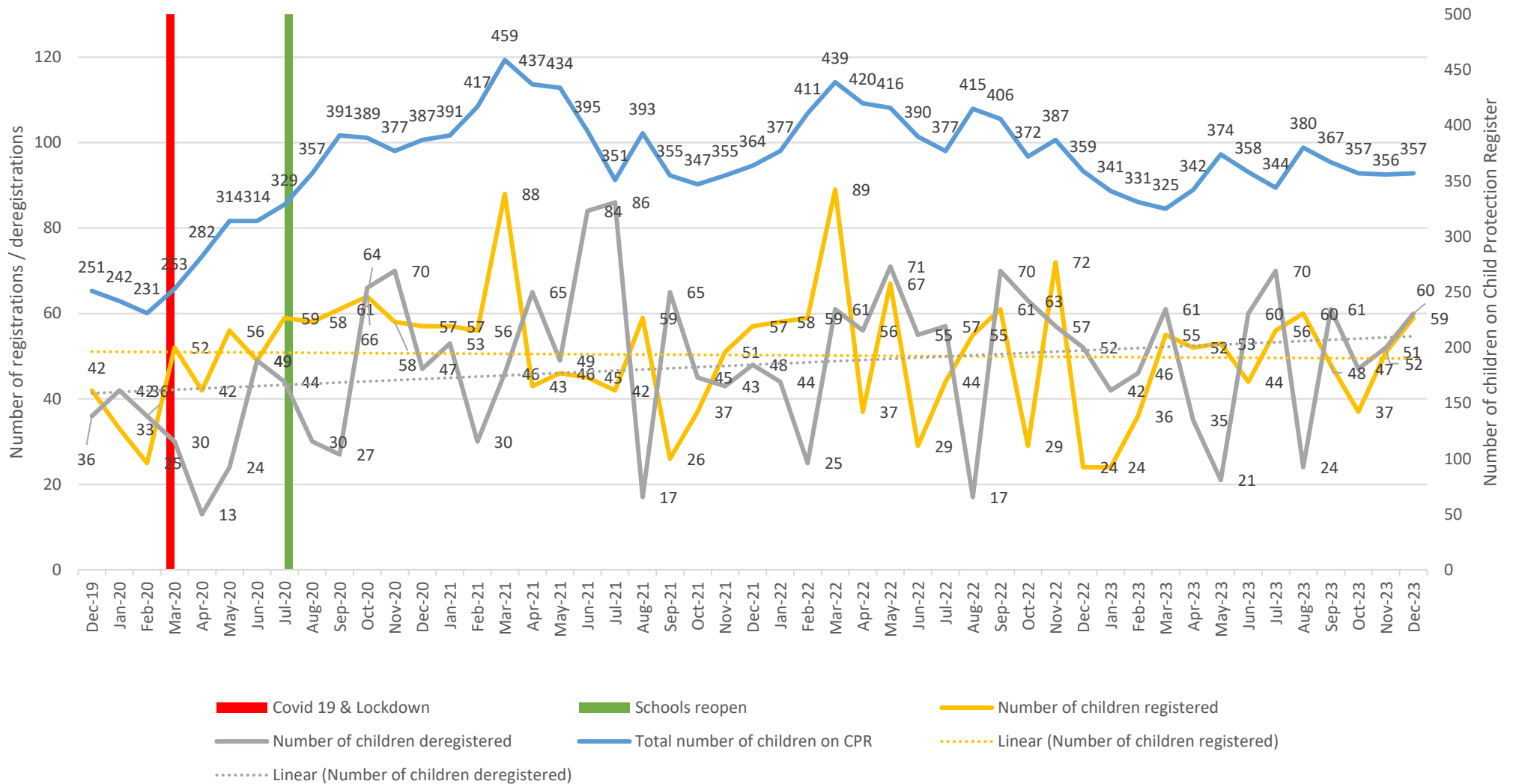
Section 47 assessments were an average 18 working days overdue in Quarter 3 2023/24 compared to 26 working days in 2022/23.

Performance in relation to the **timeliness of well-being assessments** has declined slightly during Quarter 3 2023/24 compared with Quarter 2 2023/24 and has declined compared to Quarter 3 of 2022/23 when 77.2% (414 / 536) were completed on time. In relation to the **timeliness of Section 47 assessments** performance has declined during Quarter 3 2023/24 compared to Quarter 2 2022/23, and has declined compared to Quarter 3 2022/23 when 36.9% (327 / 886) were completed on time. The following actions continue to be taken so this improvement can be sustained and enhanced:

- Use of the management reporting system (Power BI) to provide high level and team specific detailed breakdown of performance information.
- Regular solution focused team discussions to consider performance, demand, capacity and pressure points.
- The Operational Manager (OM) continues to meet with Team Managers on a weekly basis to review the previous week's performance with a focus on identifying presenting difficulties and problem solving.
- The discussions include ambitious but achievable target setting for each team to address overdue assessments as well as strategies to prevent current work falling outside timescales - by reviewing progress in respect of the work that is approaching the completion deadline, determining whether the allocated worker has capacity to complete the work and, if not, determining what the barriers and support requirements are and targeting resource to assist, working across teams where necessary.
- This detailed discussion enables the OM to have scrutiny of those Section 47 enquiries which are overdue or approaching the deadline for completion. For those deemed to be exceptional in nature, thus requiring OM approval for an extension, the information can be captured and logged. For those that are not deemed to be exceptional, action plans can be developed to expedite completion.
- As some teams perform consistently well, the weekly meetings enable best practice benchmarking, with managers sharing ideas and learning across the whole Intake and Assessment service. The meetings also enable the OM to collate thematic information about positive improvements and common difficulties which can then be escalated to inform strategic planning.
- Creative use of resource (for example remote workers, resource assistants, social work assistants) to create capacity for social work staff to focus upon those tasks that only they can do.

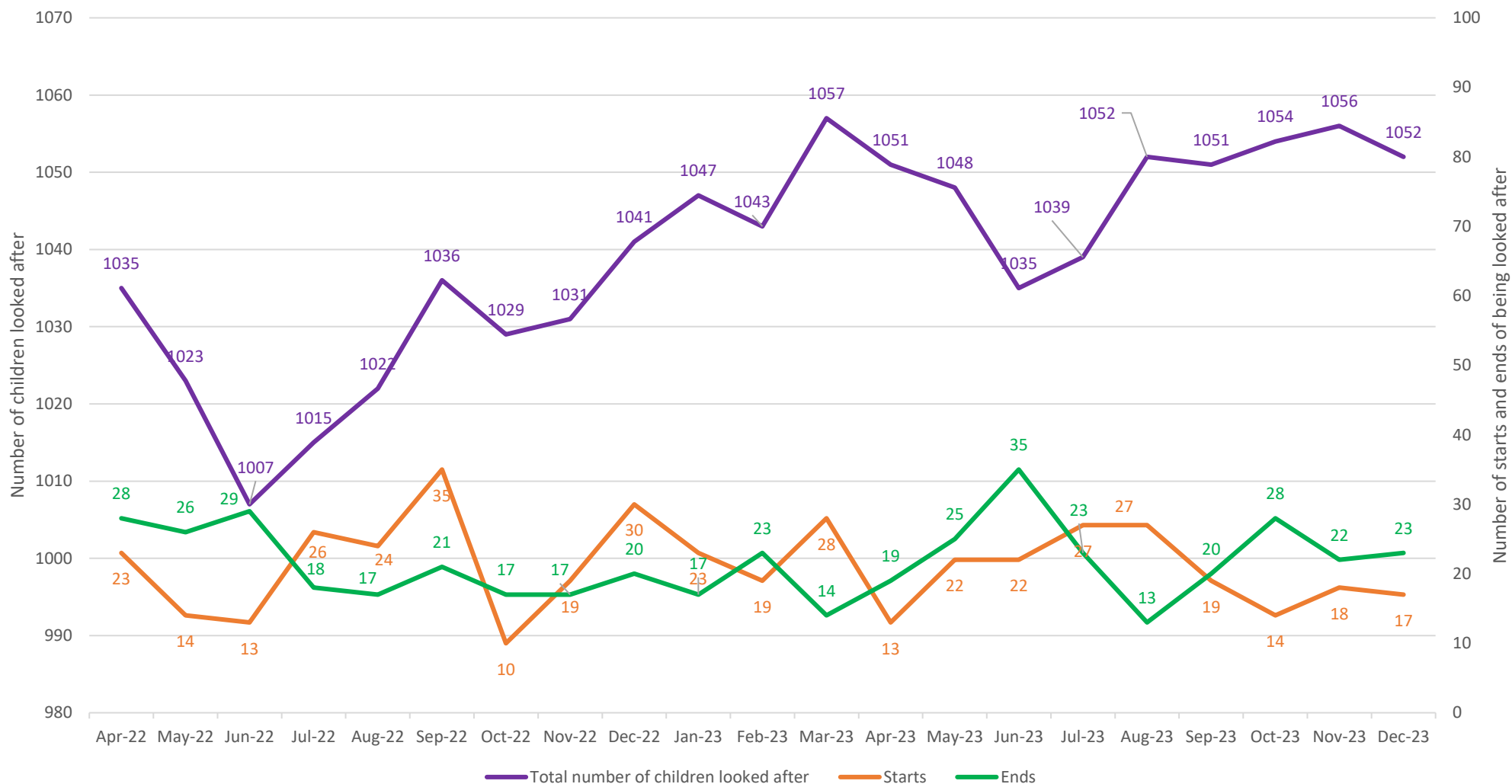
Performance relating to timeliness of assessments is in part related to a process delay in ensuring that assessments are written up - visits are undertaken and child protection investigations are not delayed. Processes are in place to address this, but it must be accepted that this is a demand led service - demand fluctuation will have an impact on performance. We are maximising use of available tools to continue to evaluate and monitor performance.

Number of Children on the Child Protection Register (CPR), Registrations and De-registrations



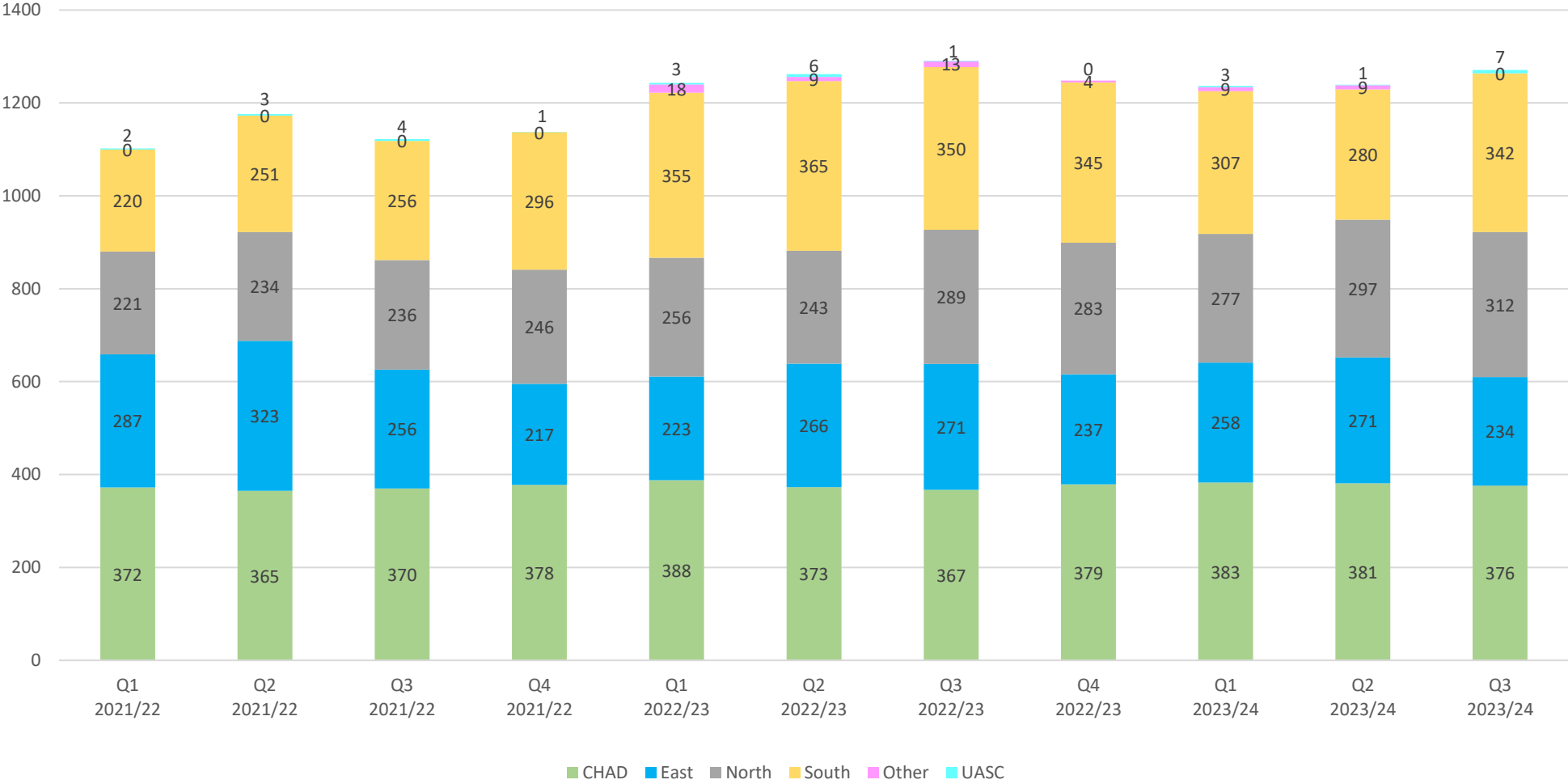
Following the steady increase in **children on the Child Protection Register (CPR)** from 231 in February 2020 to 459 in March 2021, the number decreased over the first half of 2021/22 to 347 children before increasing back to 439 children by the end of the year. Since then, the number of children on the CPR had fallen to 325 as at 31st March 2023, the lowest it had been since June 2020. During Quarter 3 2023/24 numbers of children on the register increased slightly and there were 357 children on the Child Protection Register as at 31st December 2023. The overall trend displayed in the graph above shows a gradually decreasing number of registrations compared with an increasing number of de-registrations.

Looked After Starts, Ends and Total Number of Children Looked After (CLA)



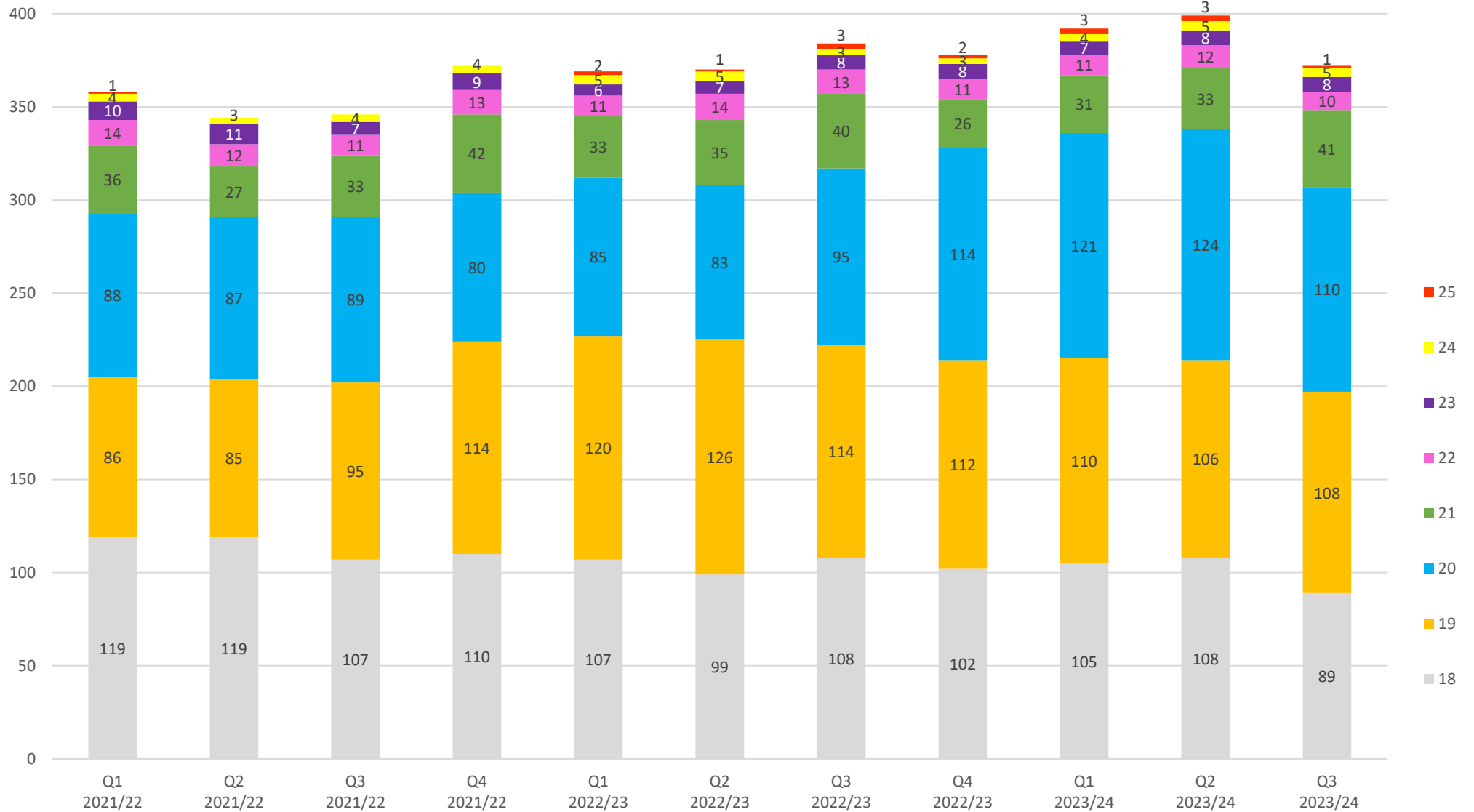
After a decrease in the **number of children looked after** in the early days of lockdown, a subsequent increase in new admissions led to a gradual increase from 939 at 27th April 2020 increasing to 1,040 at 31st March 2022. Since then, as shown on the graph above, during Quarter 1 2022/23 the number of looked after reduced to 1,007 as at 30th June 2022, before increasing steadily through the rest of the year to reach 1,057 as at 31st March 2023. This decreased during Quarter 1 of 2023/24 to 1,035 as at 30th June 2023 but has since increased again to 1,052 as at 31st December 2023. 31 of the 1,052 were unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Number of Children Receiving Care and Support (CASP)



Graph showing number of children and young people receiving Care and Support over time, with bars showing numbers of children with the Child Health and Disability Team and numbers of children in Locality teams. "Other" includes the following teams: Care and Support Planning team, Pre-birth team and the project team for Discharge and Reunification. This graph excludes care leavers open to Personal Adviser team, who are shown in the next graph. The overall number of children with a Care and Support Plan is relatively stable.

Care Leavers Over Time – By Age

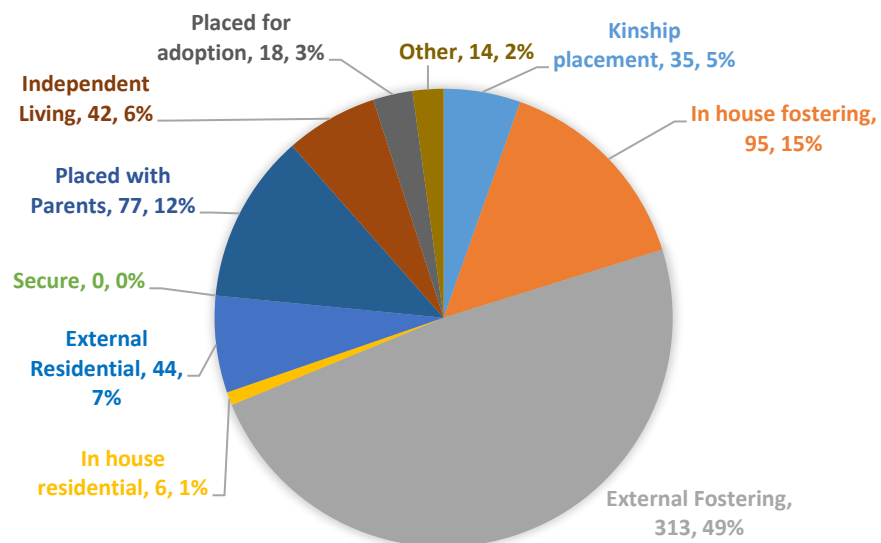


Graph showing number of care leavers over time by age, open to the Personal Adviser team. The number of care leavers is gradually increasing over time. The biggest overall growth is in the group that are currently aged 19 and 20.

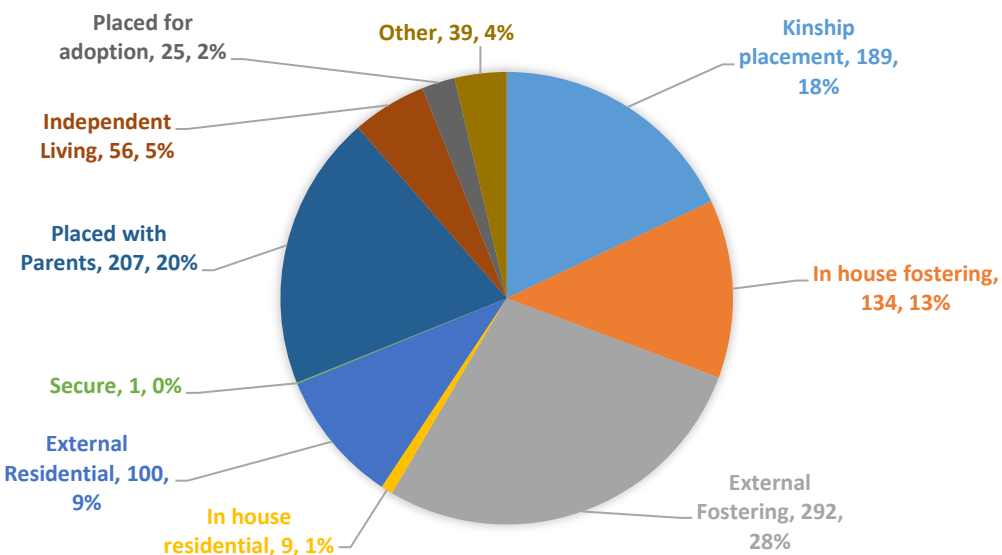
Shifting the Balance – Place

Ensuring a range of support in the community and a variety of homes for children are available in Cardiff

Total CLA by Placement Type – as at 31st March 2016 (644)



Total CLA by Placement Type – as at 31st December 2023 (1,052)



The growth in proportion of children placed with parents on a Care Order or in kinship arrangements with family members is evident – from 17% (112) in March 2016 to 38% (396) in December 2023. This increase accounts for 70% of the increase in the number of children looked after (284 / 408) and is due to a change of practice in the Courts.

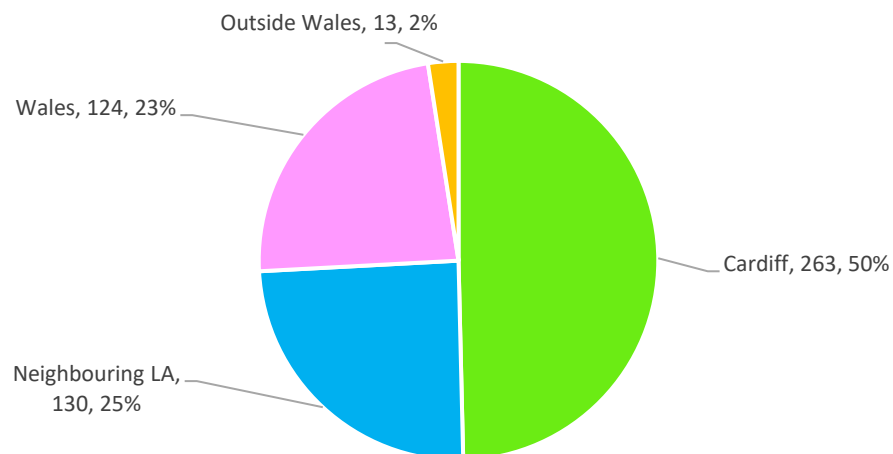
21 (34.4%) of the 61 children who started being looked after during Quarter 3 2023/24 were placed with parents on a Care Order, with family / friends or in parent and baby placements.

As at the end of Quarter 3 2023/24, 53.9%, (292 / 542) children and young people are fostered by external foster carers as a percentage of our regulated placements (excluding kinship); our target is 60%.

As at the end of Quarter 3, 2023/24, 19.0%, (103 / 542) children and young people are living in external residential placements as a percentage of our regulated placements (excluding kinship), our target is 17%. This is moving in the right direction to meet the target of 17% by the end of the year.

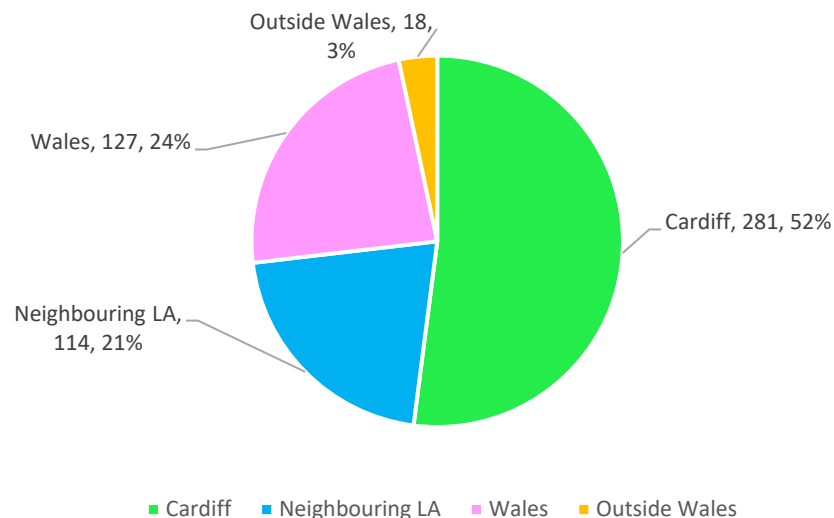
We are making good progress with the implementation of our Accommodation Strategy to develop in-house residential provision in Cardiff. 3 x properties (2 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed) have been registered by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) during Quarter 3 and a further 1 bed property is due to be registered early in Quarter 4. Work to purchase and develop additional homes is ongoing.

Placement Location as at 30th June 2022



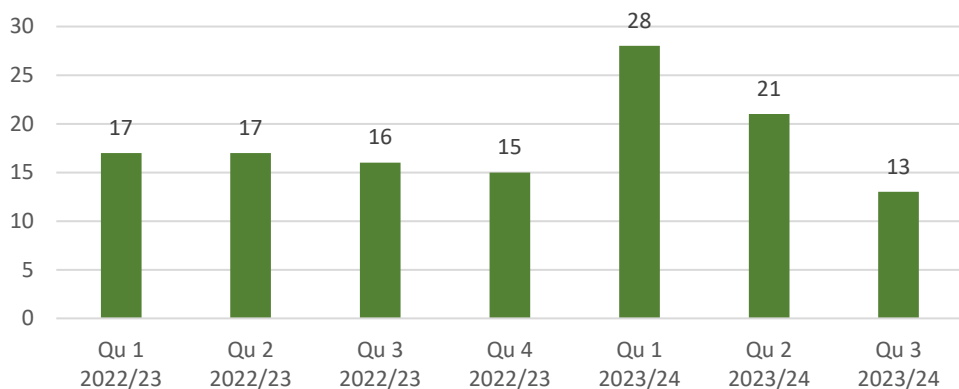
Pie chart showing the percentage of children looked after in regulated placements (excluding kinship placements) who are placed in Cardiff, neighbouring authorities, Wales and outside Wales as at 30th June 2022.

Placement Location as at 31st December 2023



Pie chart showing percentage of children looked after in regulated placements (excluding kinship placements) who are placed in Cardiff, neighbouring authorities, Wales and outside Wales as at 31st December 2023. **73% of children were placed in Cardiff or a neighbouring local authority against a target of 80%.** Pressures in the market are impacting on our ability to meet our target.

Number of Children Returned Home from Care



13 children returned home from care during Quarter 3 2023/24 compared to 21 in Quarter 2 2023/24, but more consistent with 16 in Quarter 3 of 2022/23.

Please note the number of children returned home from care includes all children placed under Section 76, of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, or Section 31 of the Children Act 1989, who return home. This could mean they return to parents or a Special Guardianship Order is granted. This is in accordance with the statutory PI definition.

Accommodation Strategy / Fostering Update

Placement sufficiency continues to be a significant issue as the market is not currently able to meet the increase in demand for placements and the complexity of needs for young people. To address this, and in line with Welsh Government's commitment to remove profit from the care of children looked after, the Accommodation Project is ongoing, and the following progress has been made:

- 3 x properties (2 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed) have been registered by CIW with a further 1 bed property is in the final stages of registration.
- Arrangements made for work to commence on 2 new 3 bed properties – 1 is due to start in the new year and the other is working towards completion of works in Quarter 4.
- During the quarter a property was identified on the open market that could be rented while the purchase is completed. The property (Clive Lodges) comprises 5 individual residences and is being used to alleviate the issue of the numbers of children in placements that are operating without registration.
- A detailed schedule of works is being devised for a 4 bed property that was purchased during Quarter 2.
- A further 4 bed property has been handed over and works are due to commence shortly.
- Site visits have been undertaken to assess the works required for the Interventions Hub property and the potential to acquire a nearby property for emergency overnight accommodation is being explored.
- Recruitment to residential staff posts progressing well with young people's panels integrated into the recruitment process.

Regular meetings to monitor and track progress in relation to short breaks continue. Key progress during the quarter includes:

- Occupancy levels were boosted by one young person in a full time placement between May and August, but the number of stays arranged have increased from 79 in April to 99 in October. Tea visits are up with 9 taking place in October.
- Plans are being developed to modernize Ty Storrie and improve the sensory zones.

Implementation of a localised model – “The Right Place in Cardiff” is progressing and key developments during the quarter include:

- Meetings with North Yorkshire colleagues and the Consultant Clinical Psychologist based in the North Yorkshire Hub have been extremely insightful in demonstrating the important role that they play in the model.
- A meeting with North Yorkshire colleagues and Cardiff Fostering managers to focus on the Family Carers has taken place with to discuss the roles in depth.
- Recruitment for the Out of Hours team that will support the Hub model continues with a number of posts successfully recruited to.
- Senior managers from the Interventions Hub have met with the care provider currently supporting at Clive Lodges.

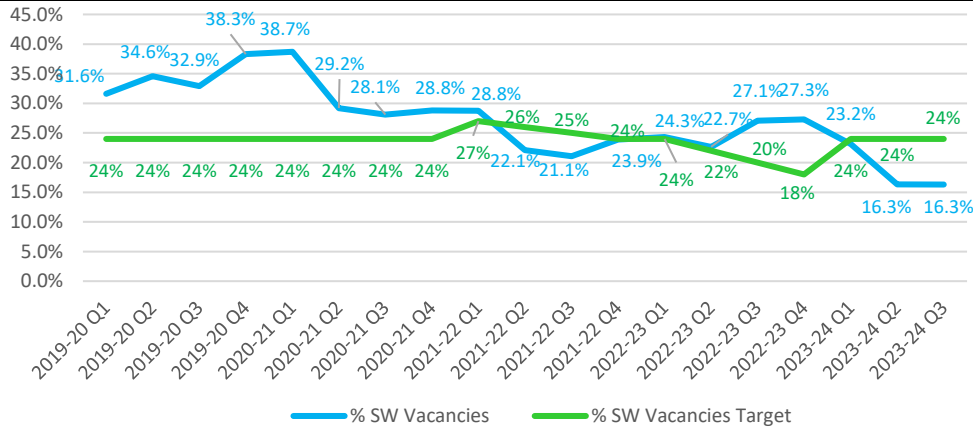
Work to develop the in-house fostering services is ongoing and the following progress has been achieved during the quarter:

- The number of children in in-house fostering placements was 134 at 31st December compared with 135 at 30th September. This has exceeded the target of 130.
- Recruitment and retention plan drafted and being finalised in readiness for sign off in Quarter 4.
- Links have been made with Education to support the promotion of fostering via schools. 128 schools have been contacted and at the time of writing 48 schools have responded and have received packs of leaflets and posters for distribution. Training for Governors is being arranged.
- Attendance at senior management meetings across Council Directorates is almost complete. This is now being rolled out to wider team meetings within each directorate.
- At the end of Quarter 3 we had received a total of 169 enquiries for the year to date and are on track to meet the annual target of 178. We have carried out 35 initial enquiry visits (IEV) which means the conversion rate from enquiry to IEV is currently sitting at 21% which is below the best practice target of 33% (the national average is 24%). 9 carers have been approved to date this year, working towards an annual target of 22 approvals.
- A review of short break carers has been undertaken and discussions have been held around best use of resource. Links have been made with the Adolescent Resource Centre to discuss edge of care opportunities and short break vacancies are reviewed weekly for in house provision.
- Preparation for contact with Ukrainian support families completed – letters are ready to be issued to explore the option of fostering or providing supported lodgings with them.

Shifting the Balance – People

Supporting a permanent workforce

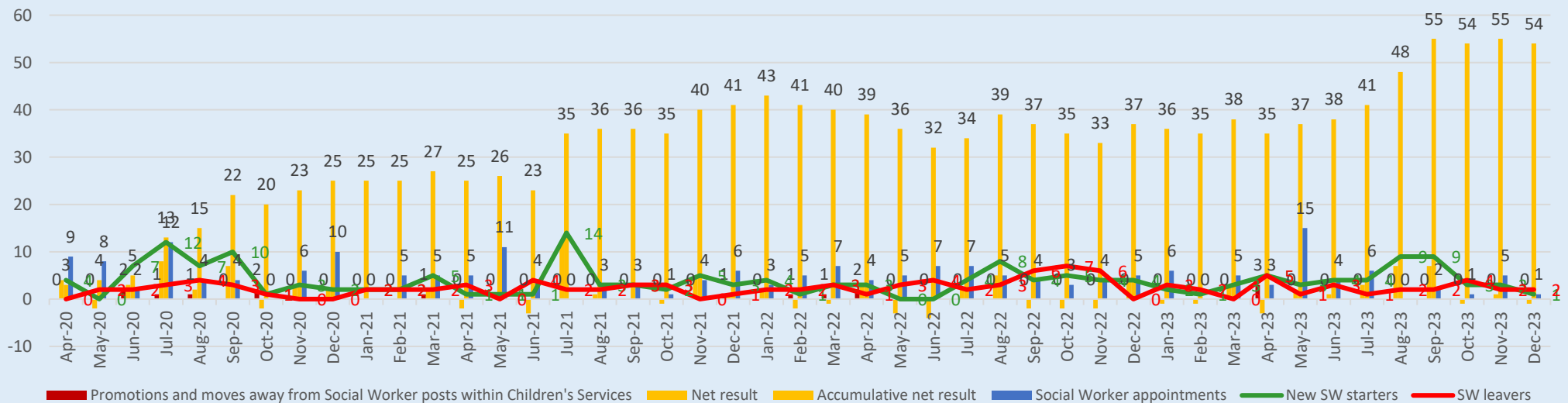
Percentage of Social Worker Vacancies in all Teams



16.3% **Social Worker vacancy rate** as at end of Quarter 3 2023/24. Target met. 34 out of 208 posts were vacant and 174 posts filled on a permanent basis.

- Vacancy rate has remained at 16.3% at the end of Quarter 3 compared to 23.2% in Quarter 1 and has continued to exceed the target level of 24%.
- In addition to this, 8 social workers have been appointed and are due to take up post in the coming weeks with an additional 3 students also due to start when they qualify later in the year. 1 student has joined us as a Social Work Assistant while they are waiting on their qualifications.

Net Result of Social Workers Starting and Leaving



Sickness Update

FTE Target = 12.0	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Q4 2023/24
Children's Services Sickness FTE days lost per person (cumulative during year)	2.56	5.82	9.1	
Children's Services Sickness FTE days lost per person full year forecast	11.01	12.81	12.74	

Source: Corporate HR Data

The target for 2023/24 is 12.0 FTE sickness days lost for Children's Services employees.

The final outturn for 2022/23 was 12.93 FTE days lost per person which met the target of 14.5 and was a slight improvement on 2021/22 when the outturn was 13.0.

During Quarter 3 the number of sickness FTE days lost increased to 9.1 per person, which has taken the forecast figure to 12.74 FTE sickness days lost per person which is over our target of 12.0 days, but would be slightly lower than last year.

Sickness is closely monitored by the Children's Management Team to ensure that processes are followed. Options to support staff to return to work on a phased return are explored with input from all members of the management team. As our direct service provision grows, it is expected that this will lead to an increase in sickness levels.

Workforce Strategy Update

Work to implement our recruitment and retention strategy to reduce social worker vacancies is ongoing. Key progress during the quarter includes:

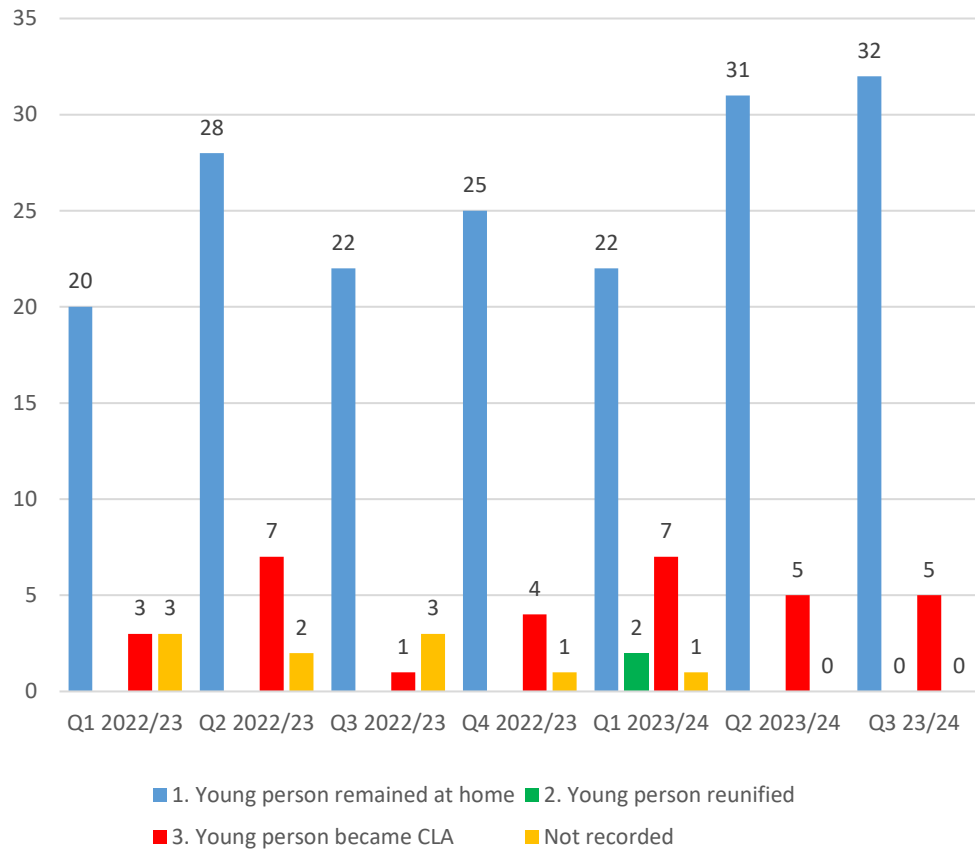
- Detailed Workforce Action Plan being implemented and progress monitored as part of Directorate Delivery Planning process.
- Vacancy rate remained stable at 16.3% achieving target level. In addition 8 social workers have been appointed and will take up post in the coming weeks. A further 3 students are due to start during the year and qualify later in the year. 1 student has joined as Social Work Assistant while waiting on their qualifications.
- Recruitment to residential posts in support of the implementation of the Accommodation Strategy (see above) continues to progress well. Training requirements have been mapped and a plan for implementation is being developed.
- The Newly Qualified Social Worker Academy has been launched as is now live. It will provide a Learning and Development Framework for practitioners in their first year of practice and a further continued professional development framework that supports the completion of the CPEL programme.
- A skills analysis and training and development audit has been completed for social work assistants, principal social workers and team managers – to feed into training matrix to understand the skills within each role and ensure they are maximised.
- A Training Team Manager has been appointed and recently taken up post. This post will progress work that has started on the development of role specific induction, competency frameworks and improving career progression. They will also lead on the areas referenced below:
 - Line management of the Practice Leads.
 - Work to widen the skills audit mentioned above to include Grade 7 and 8 social workers.
 - Implementation of the new competency framework for social work assistants and work to widen this to other posts.

Shifting the Balance – Practice

Developing our practice and procedures

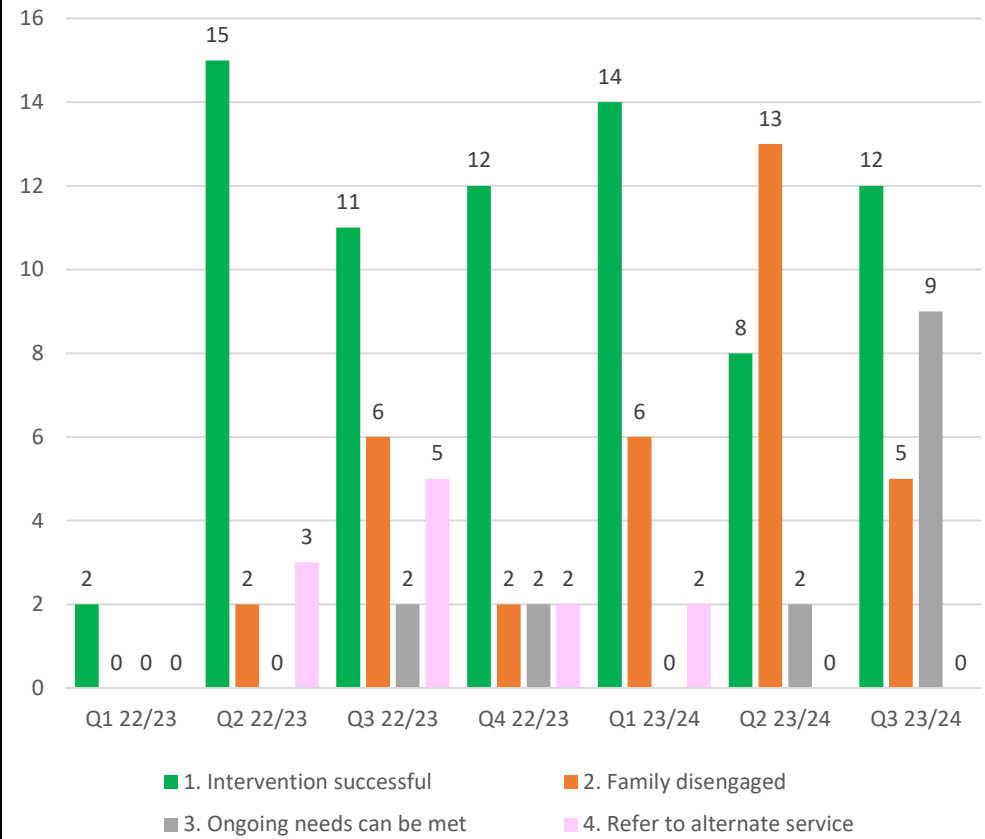
Interventions Hub

ARC Closure Outcome



During Quarter 3, 32 young people who received an **intervention from the Adolescent Resource Centre** remained at home compared with 5 young people who started being looked after.

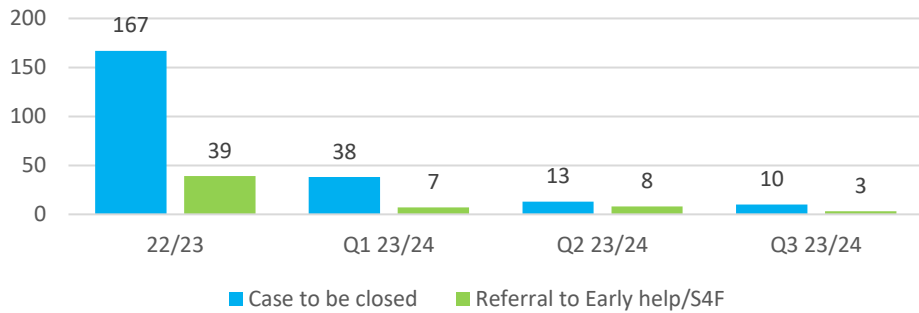
Think Safe Closure Outcome



During Quarter 3, 12 young people received a successful **intervention from the Think Safe! service** and 9 young people have ongoing needs that can be met; the family of 5 young people disengaged.

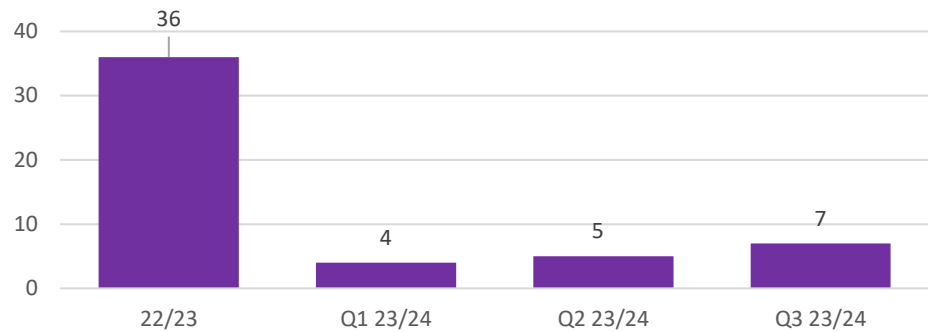
Reviewing Hub

Step downs following CASP Review



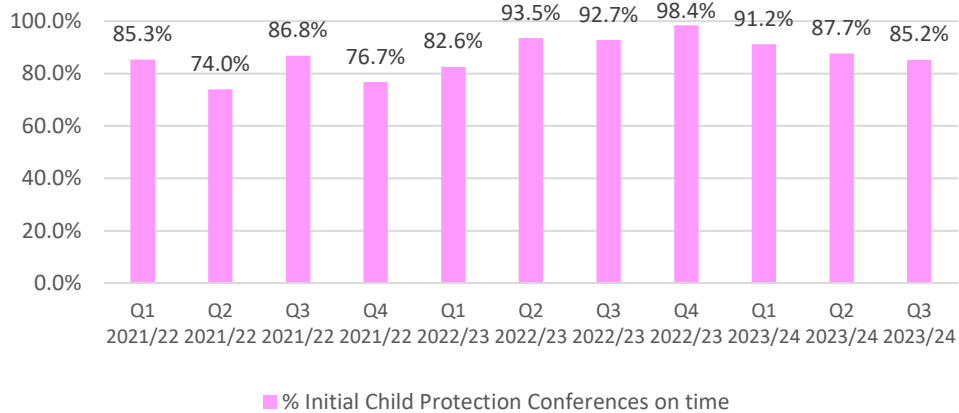
During Quarter 3 2023/24, 10 children have been identified for case closure and an additional 3 for step down to Early Help / Support4Families from 347 CASP reviews. We continue to focus the work of this team on priority areas rather than across the whole system due to resource pressures.

Safeguarding procedures to be considered



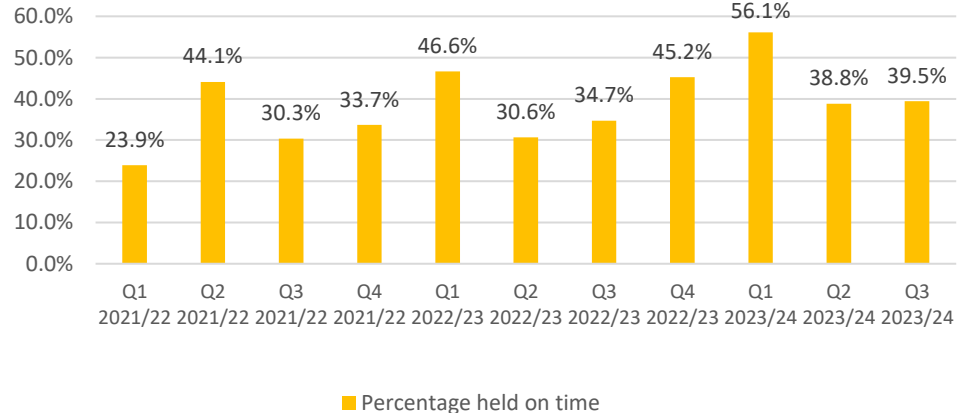
During Quarter 3, it was identified that safeguarding procedures should be considered for 7 of the 347 children reviewed – step ups – compared with 4 / 396 in Quarter 3 2022/23.

Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences On Time



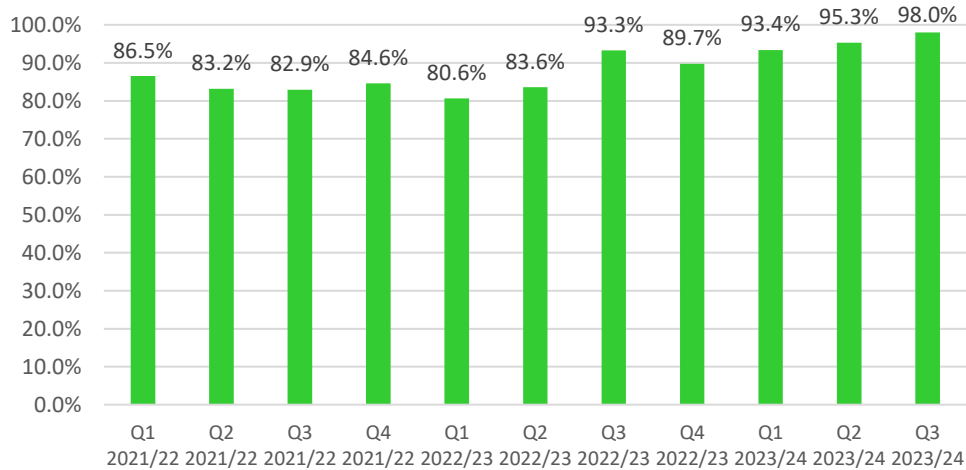
Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences held on time = 85.2% (150 / 176) during Quarter 3 2023/24 compared to 87.7% (157 / 179) during Quarter 2 2023/24. Although performance remains relatively high, this is rated as amber due to the reduction in timeliness over the last 3 quarters. All late conferences have since been held and were, on average, 5 working days late. The reasons for late conferences (including demand, scheduling errors and recording delays) are being reviewed to inform actions needed to improve timeliness.

Percentage of Initial Core Group Meetings On Time



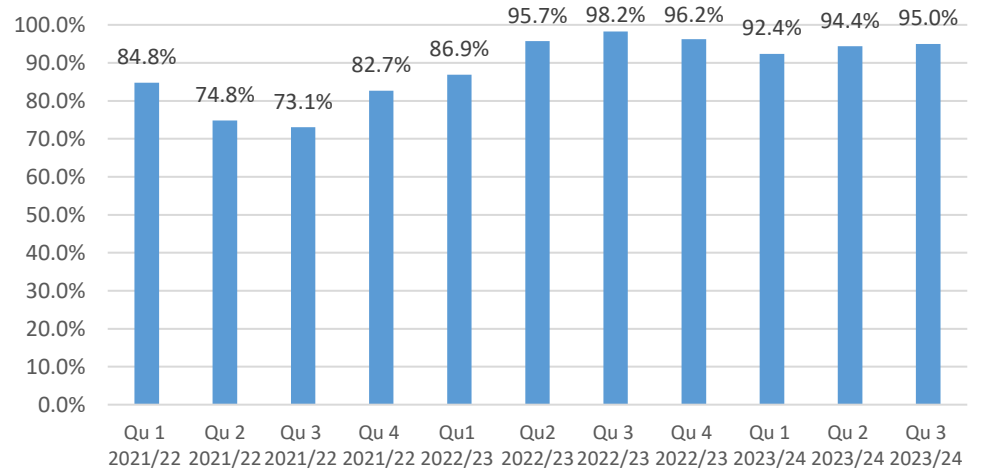
Percentage of Initial Core Group meetings held on time = 39.5% (58 / 147) during Quarter 3, compared to 38.8% (64 / 165) during Quarter 2 2023/24. This area of performance continues to be unacceptable, and new arrangements have been put in place during Quarter 4 to provide dedicated resource to monitoring and minuting initial core groups. It is anticipated that the impact of this will start to be evident in Quarter 4 and more so in Quarter 1 2024/25.

Percentage of Child Protection Review Conferences On Time



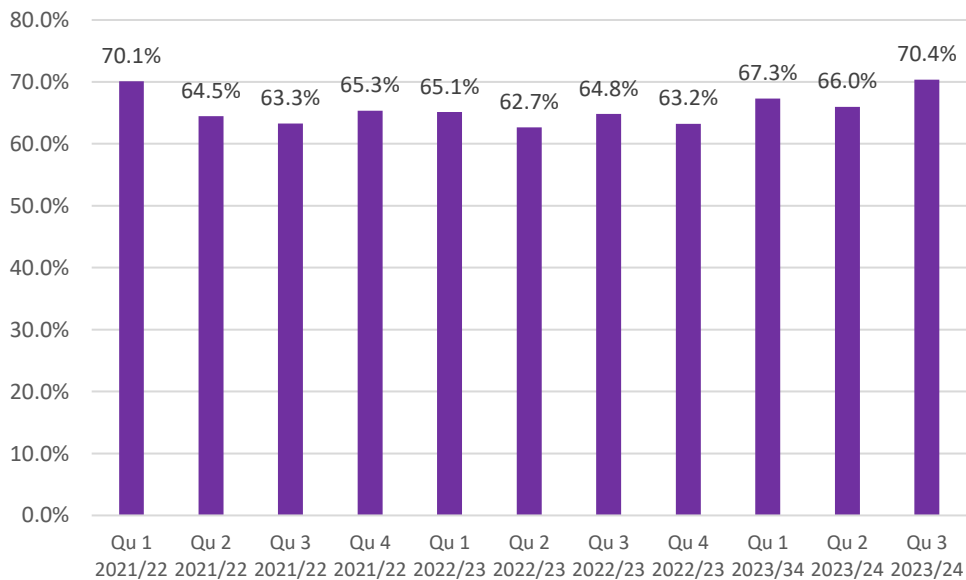
The percentage of Child Protection Review Conferences held on time is 98.0% (288 / 294) during Quarter 3 2023/24, compared to 95.3% (262 / 275) during Quarter 3 2023/24. Performance in Quarter 3 was at its highest level since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Percentage of Child Looked After Reviews On Time

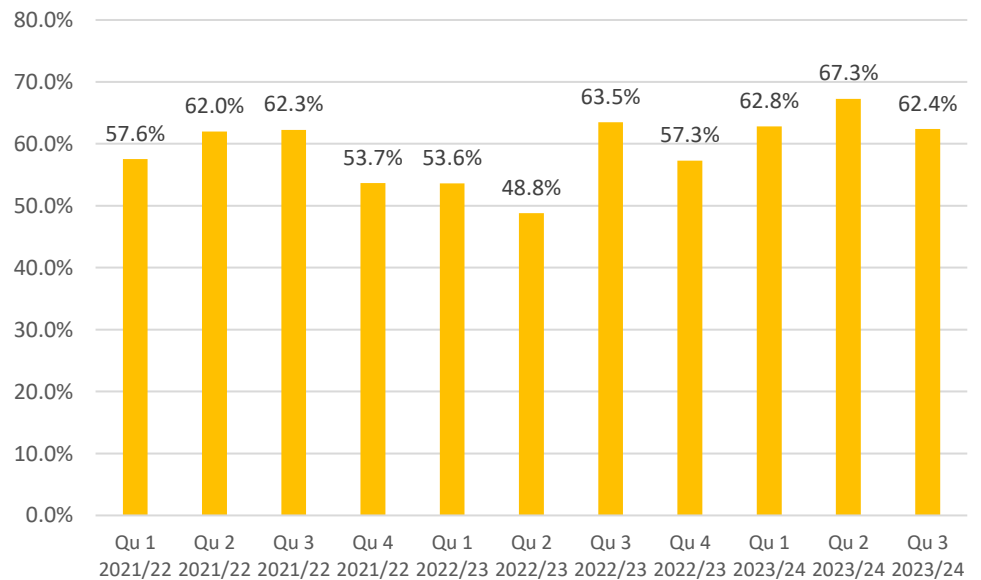


The percentage of looked after reviews held on time during Quarter 3 is at 95.0% (623 / 656) compared to 94.4% (603 / 639) in Quarter 2. A system is now in place to escalate issues with convening initial looked after reviews.

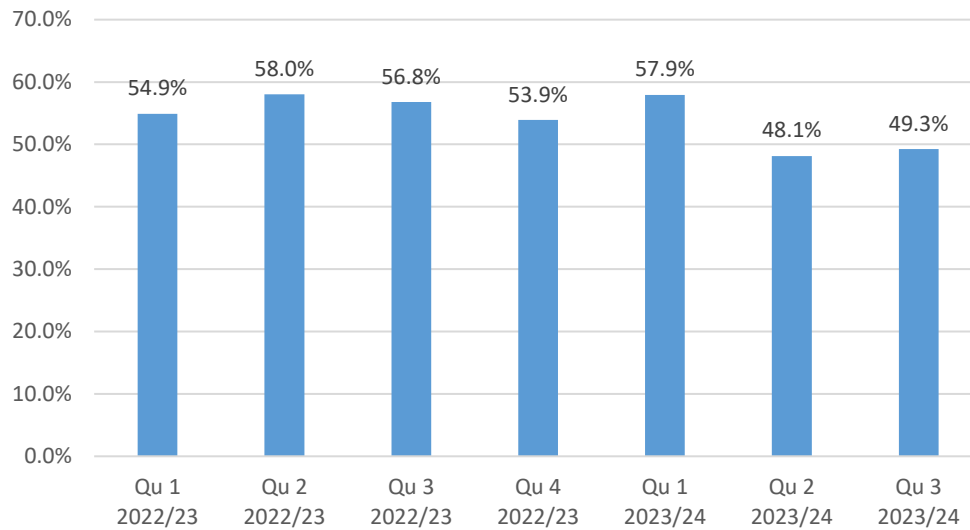
Percentage of Visits to Children on the CPR On Time



Percentage of Statutory Visits to CLA On Time



Percentage of Visits to CASP On Time



Commentary

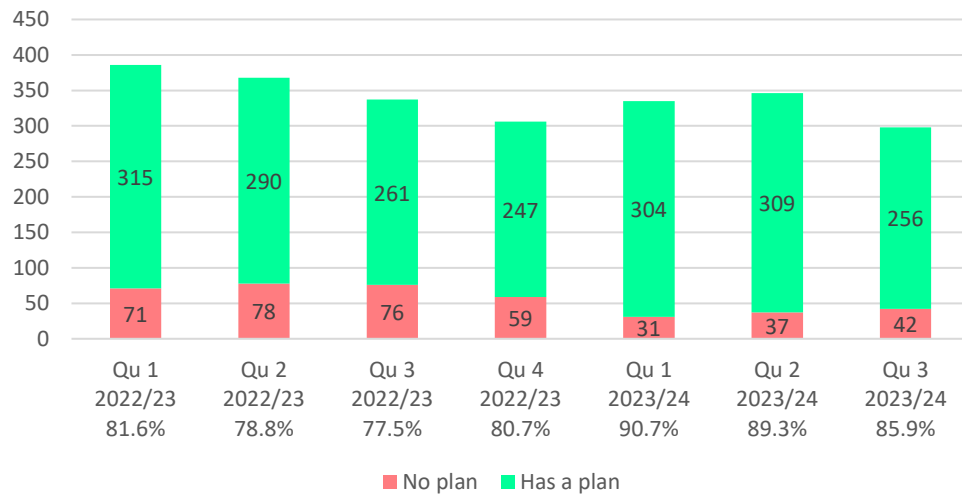
The percentage of visits to children placed on the CPR on time = 70.4% (1,567 / 2,227) during Quarter 3 2023/24 compared to 66.0% (1,324 / 2,222) during Quarter 2 2023/24. However, visits that were late were undertaken, on average, just 1.2 days late.

The percentage of statutory visits to children looked after on time = 62.4% (698 / 1,119) during Quarter 3 2023/24 compared to 67.3% (641 / 953) during Quarter 2 2023/24. Visits that were late were undertaken, on average, 11.5 days late.

The percentage of visits to children with a care and support plan on time = 49.3% (1,186 / 2,408) during Quarter 3 2023/24 compared to 48.1% (1,320 / 2,742) during Quarter 2 2023/24.

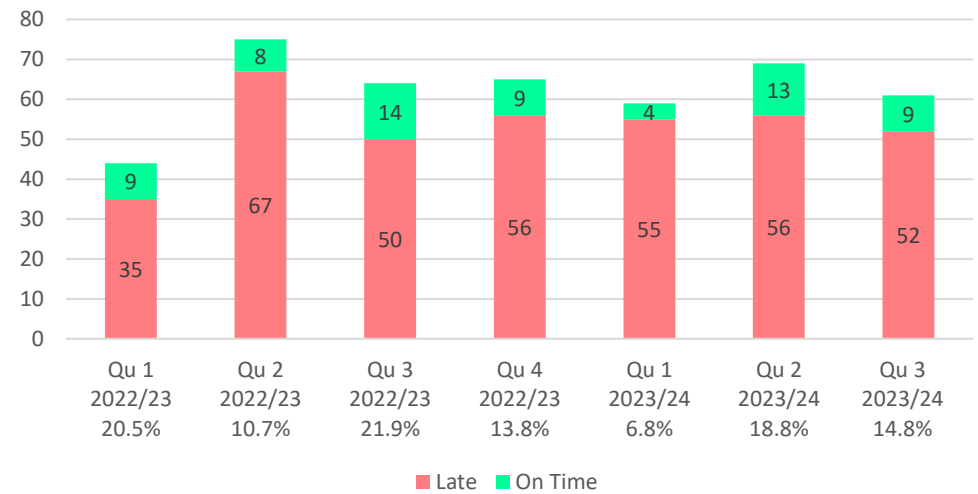
Performance information has been reviewed and adapted to provide OMs with more detailed data to support monitoring of the timeliness of visits being undertaken and recorded. This will allow focused support and understanding of the barriers to improving performance. A system is now in place for Social Work Resource Assistants support teams to improve the monitoring of timeliness using the weekly Power BI report.

Child Protection Plans in Place



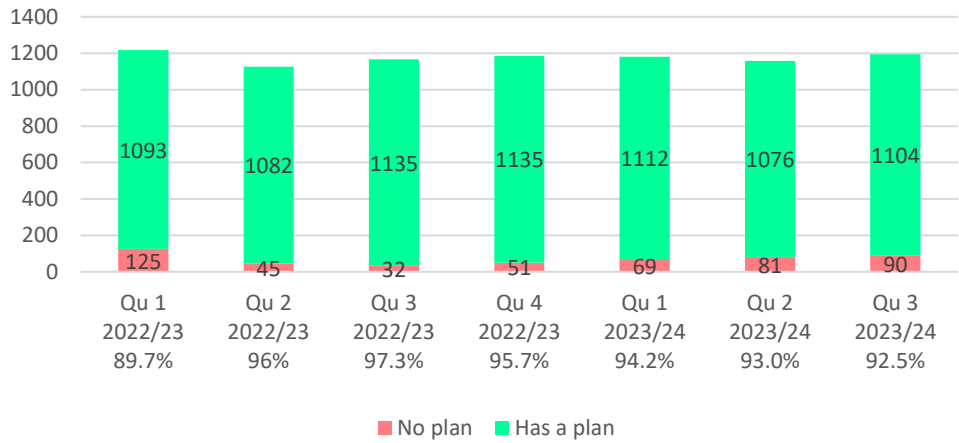
85.9% (256 / 298) of children on the CPR had a plan in place (not including children where the plan is not yet required – within 10 days following registration).

Children looked after plans in place within 10 working days of start of being looked after



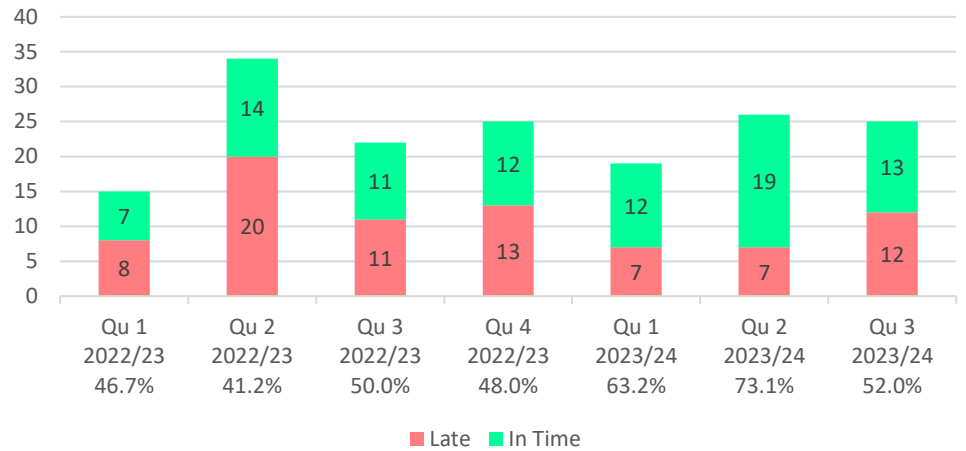
14.8% (9 / 61) of children looked after had a plan in place within 10 working days of starting to be looked after. However, 99% (1,038 / 1,053) of children looked after had a care plan at 31st December.

Care and Support Plans in Place



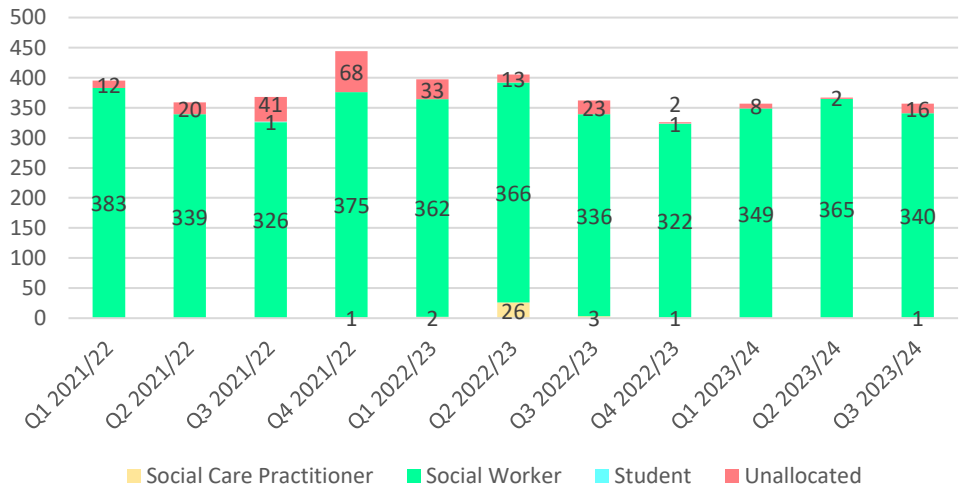
Figures do not include those de-registered in the last 14 days from the CPR or those with a well-being assessment in progress as a plan is not yet required. This demonstrates that our CASP reviewing function is working well.

Pathway Plans in Place Within 3 Months of Becoming Eligible



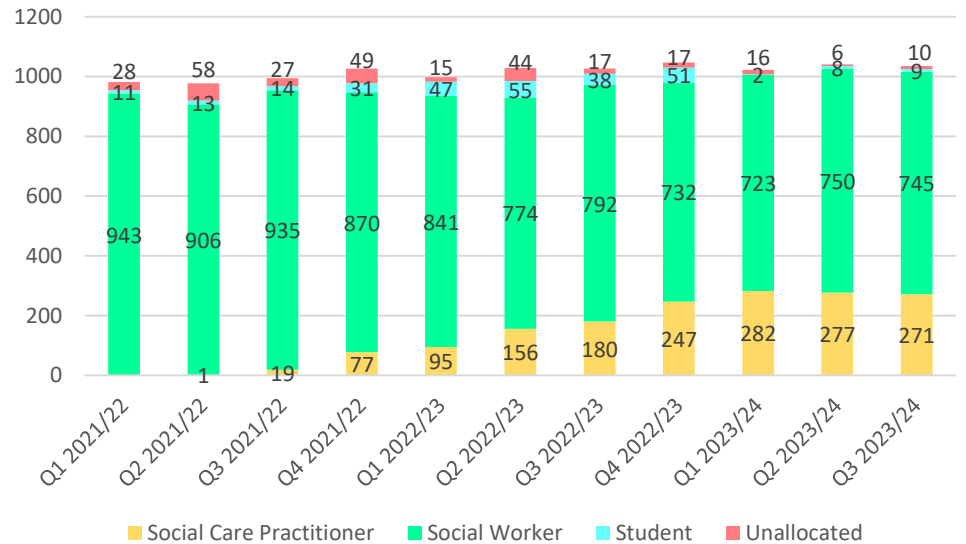
Pathway plans will be monitored as part of the new Panel process that will be implemented in Quarter 1 2024/25.

Child Protection Allocations

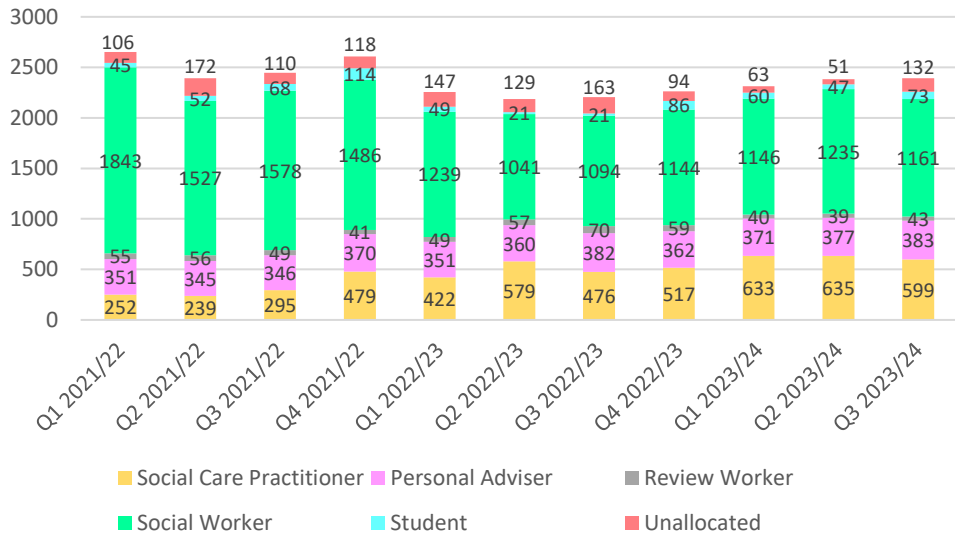


All unallocated cases have since been allocated.

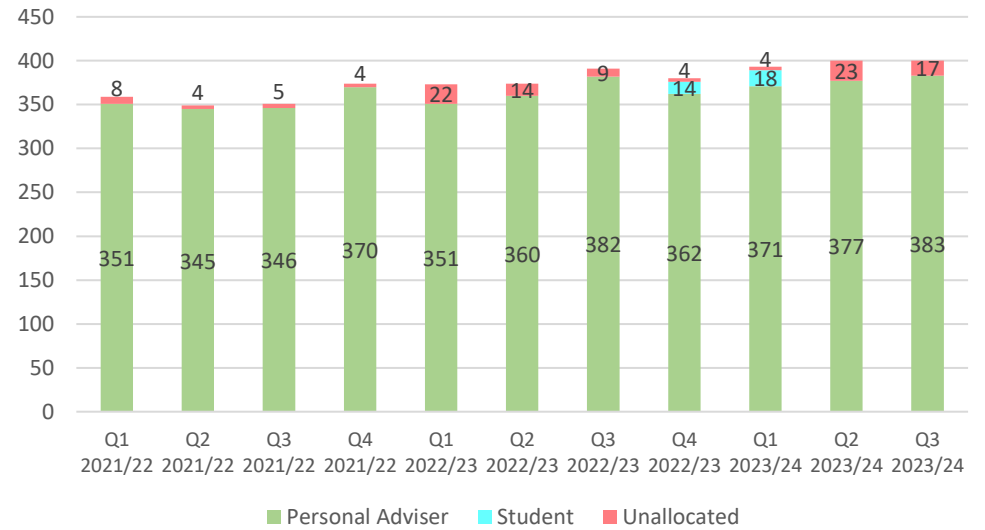
Child Looked After Allocations



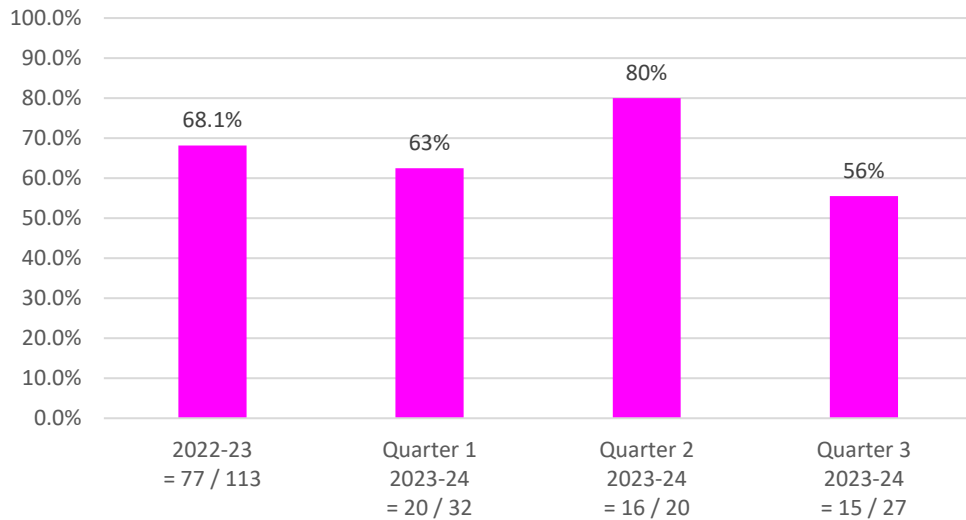
Care and Support Allocations



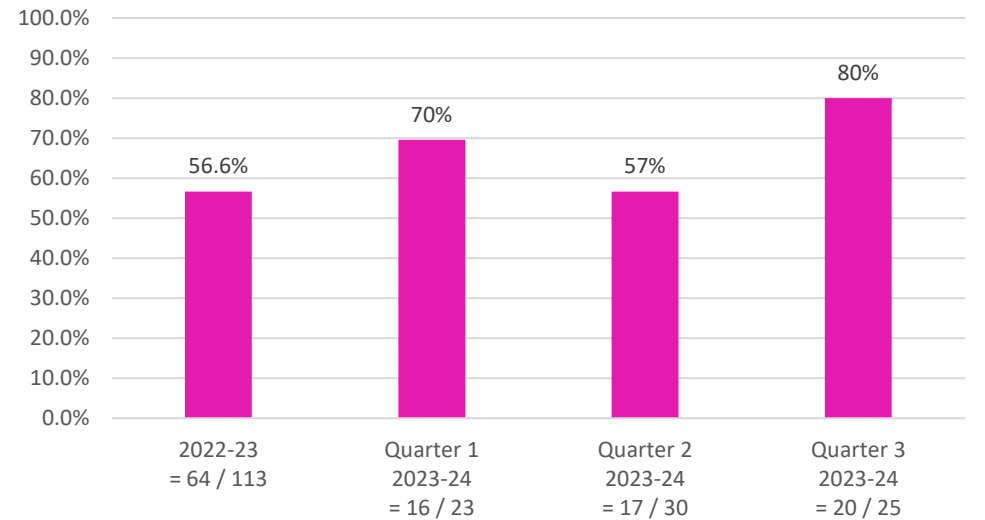
Personal Advisor Allocation



Percentage of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of education, employment or training in the 12 months since leaving care



Percentage of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of education, employment or training in the 13-24 months since leaving care



Operating / Practice Model / Quality Assurance Update

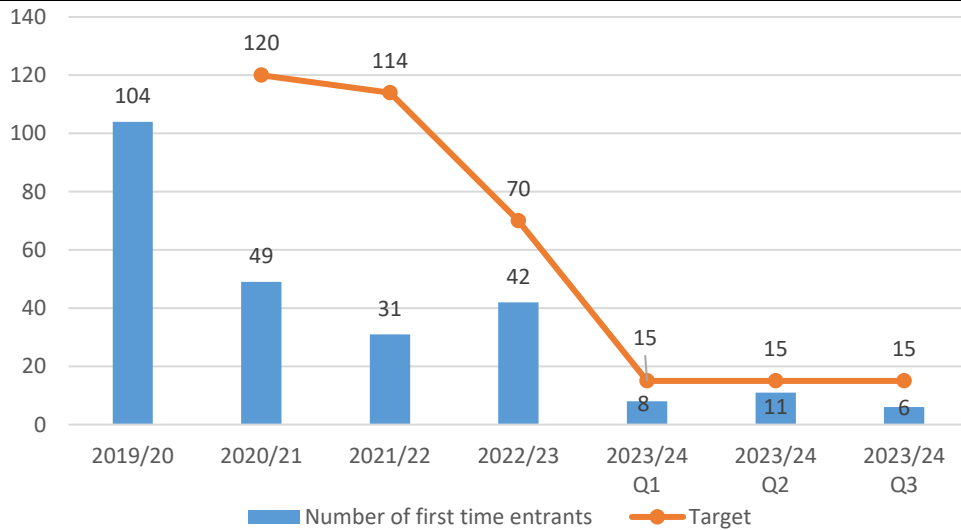
Work to develop a new operating model continues. The next step will be to implement changes to the arrangements for the Child Health and Disability Teams – a proposal has been developed and is in the process of being agreed. The review of business support is ongoing – the initial proposal has been shared with staff and a period of consultation has taken place. Next steps include reviewing the proposal in light of feedback, developing job descriptions and further consultation with staff. Motivational Interviewing Training has started during the quarter and enquiries about train the trainer sessions are being made to ensure ongoing roll out across the directorate and ongoing training for new starters. A Trauma Informed training module has been developed. A session has been delivered and roll out plans will be developed in Quarter 4.

In relation to Quality Assurance, audit activity continued during Quarter 3, including a particular focus on preparation for the Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA). The audit programme has been extended to include the Independent Reviewing Officer service. Additional Quality Assurance activity during Quarter 3 includes:

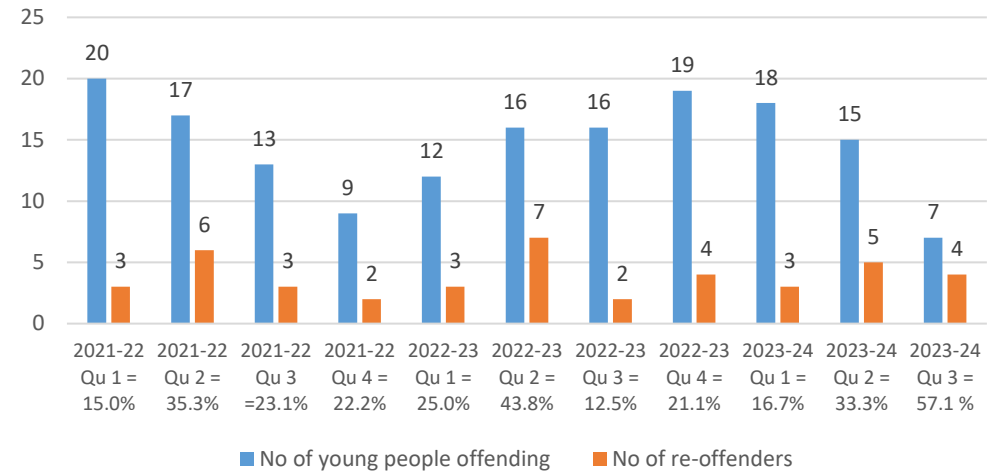
- JICPA preparation work – 30 cases audited by QA / Practice Leads and guidance documents for staff developed.
- “Practice Matters” week was held in October 2023. A total of 1,618 staff attended 22 workshops throughout the week.
- The annual “Practice Matters” was launched in October and focuses on priority areas identified via audit activities. Phase 1 – all about the child (lived experience) has been completed.
- Practice Matters forums for managers and practitioners have continued to be held. Sessions have been held in relation to Direct Work Toolkit and sharing examples of good direct work.
- Strengthening Practice meetings have continued – these are meetings of senior operational managers and leaders have been introduced to scrutinise performance and the quality of practice via monitoring of action plans.
- Completion of thematic reviews for children who have experienced 3+ placement moves, and in relation to Child Sexual Abuse (CSA).
- Completion of individual management reviews (x 5) and reflection meetings held.
- Development of practice guidance for Internal Escalation Process for Managing Disagreements on Case Planning for Children and Young People, and also use of interpreters.
- Learning from practice session held with the extended Children’s Management Team in November 2023 in relation to Child and Adult Practice Review findings.
- Quality Assurance Framework being updated.

Youth Justice Service

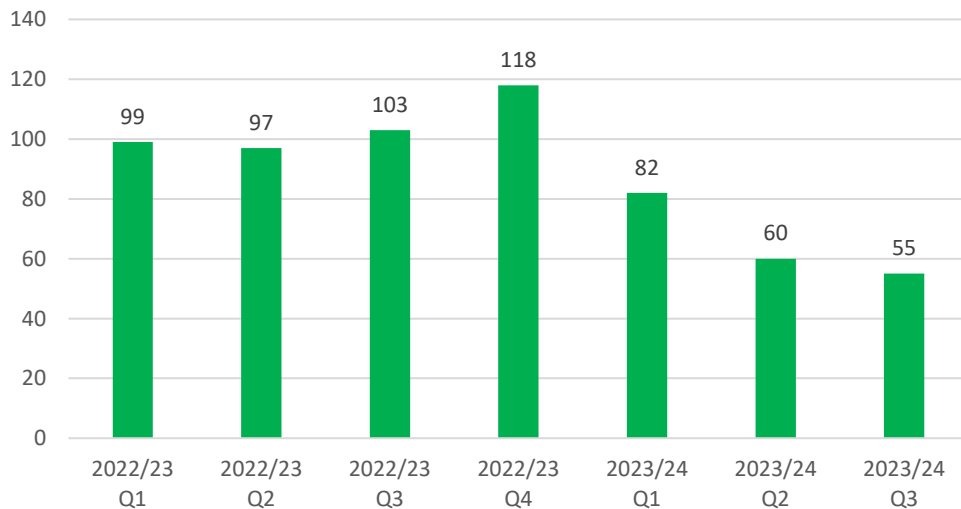
Number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System



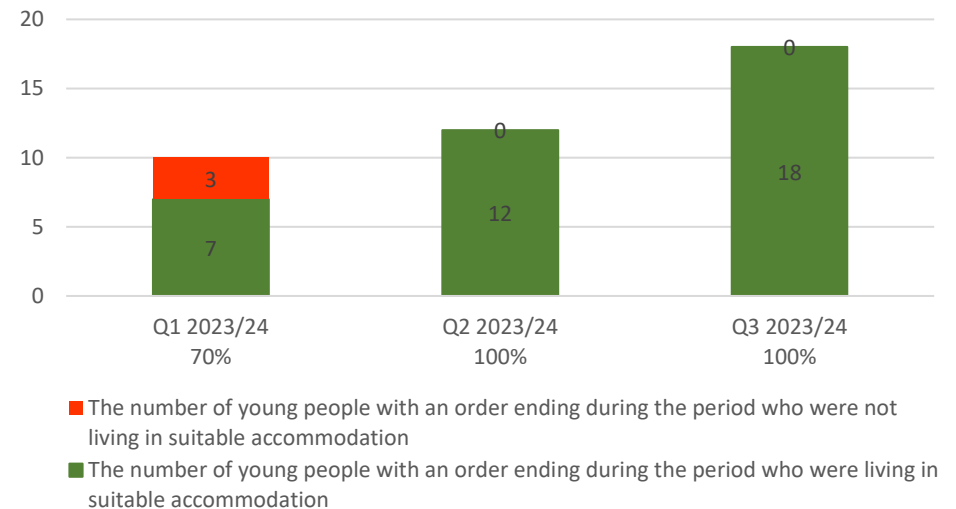
Percentage of Children Re-offending Within 6 Months of their Previous Offence



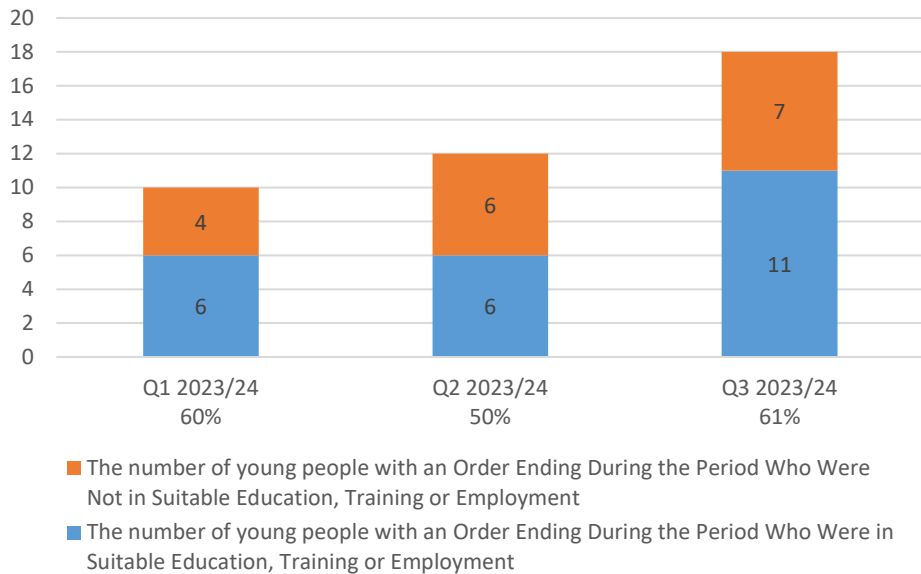
Number of Young People in Receipt of a Prevention Service from the Youth Justice Service



Percentage of Children with an Order Ending During the Period Who Were Living In Suitable Accommodation



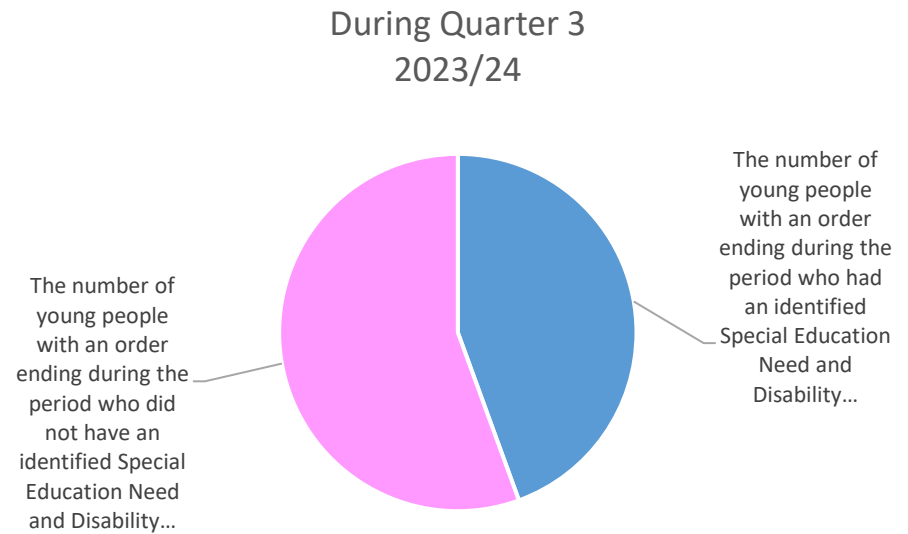
Percentage of Children with an Order Ending During the Period Who Were in Suitable Education, Training or Employment



11 out of 18 (61%) young people with an order ending during Quarter 3 were in suitable education, training or employment.

Source: YJS

Percentage of Children with an Order Ending During the Period Who Had an Identified Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) / Additional Learning Need (ALN)



8 out of 18 (44%) young people with an order ending during Quarter 3 had an identified Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) / Additional Learning Need (ALN).

Source: YJS