

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW - SCRUTINY QUARTER 3 2017-18

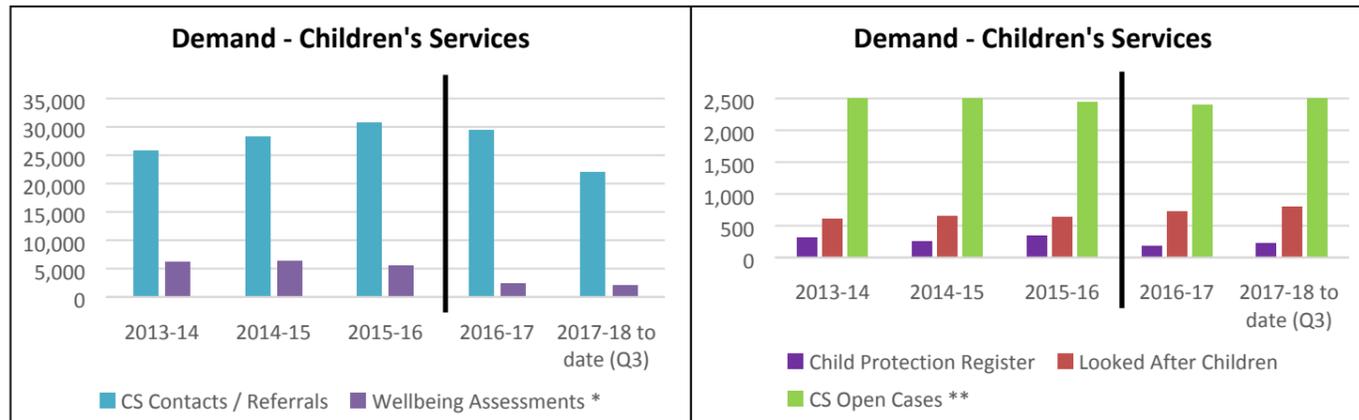
Whilst Quarter 3 performance was mixed, there are some areas of strength, particularly given demand pressures, however there are also some areas for improvement. The percentage of looked after child in agency placements has reduced to 70.7% (from 72.4% in Quarter 2 this is the lowest quarter outturn since December 2015. Performance in relation to initial child protection conferences decreased to 80% (86 / 107) due to a number of competing priorities in addition to the expectation on all Independent Reviewing Officers to attend 5 day Signs of Safety training. A dip in performance was anticipated at the start of implementing Signs of Safety due to the demands relating to training. All late conferences have since been held. Performance in respect of timely wellbeing assessments further reduced to 72% (517 / 723) from 77% (518 / 677) in Quarter 2. This is in the context of a further 7% (54) increase in the number of assessments completed. Performance in relation to allocation of children on the Child Protection Register and looked after children to social workers remained at 100%.

The Assistant Director of Children's Services advises that the Committee be reassured by the current performance of the service, particularly when taking demand pressures into account.

Work to progress the Directorate's commitments in the Corporate Plan has continued and key areas of progress include:

- Safeguarding faith communities
- Corporate Parenting
- Implementation of the Signs of Safety risk assessment framework.

Red PIs:	Red / Amber Actions (Corporate Plan):	
	Social Services	Children's Services
Initial child protection conferences		Social Worker Vacancies
Wellbeing assessments	Safeguarding Vision	
Children supported to remain at home	Disability Futures	
Looked after children returned home from care	Direct Payments	
Children engaged in their looked after review		
Parents engaged in looked after reviews		
Social worker vacancies		



\* Not including advice & assistance only or S47s from 2016-17 (567 S47s in Q3); \*\* Not including YOS open cases

The above charts illustrate the level of demand that the service is experiencing now, compared with the last 4 financial years. The number of Contacts / Referrals received stabilised in 2016/17 following the introduction of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It is, however, difficult to make comparisons pre-and post-Act due to the change in landscape. Based on demand during the year to date, the number of Contact / Referrals received during the year is on course to be on a par with, or slightly exceed, the number received in 2016/17. It is anticipated that the impact of Support4Families will be to reduce the number of Contact / Referrals as people are signposted to appropriate early help services, however it is too soon to measure the impact yet as the service was introduced part way through Quarter 3. Further information on the impact of Support4Families will be provided at the next committee. The service has seen an increase in all types of cases from March 2017, however the cases progressing for a wellbeing assessment continue to be appropriate for Social Services intervention – some should have been referred earlier.

In relation to child and parent engagement in looked after review - children, where appropriate, are offered the option to attend their reviews, but some may choose not to. Where they choose not to attend the Independent Reviewing Officer will make arrangements to visit them either prior to the review or immediately afterwards. The option of getting their advocate to discuss any issues with them before or after the review is also offered to ensure nothing is overlooked. The timing of the visit is dependent on when it becomes known that the child has chosen not to attend, as this can sometimes happen on the morning of the review. The location of the review meeting can also deter children, e.g. many children won't attend reviews held in school as they don't want the stigma of having to leave class in front of their peers.

Similarly parents are invited and encouraged to attend reviews where it is appropriate, but again they may choose not to attend.

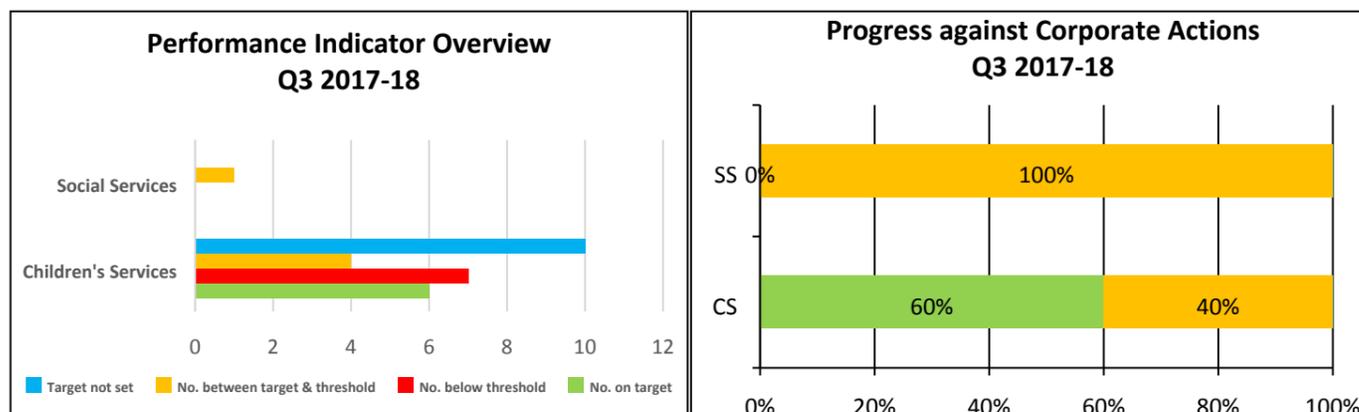
The aim is to ensure that all children, where possible, are supported to attend their own reviews, and we are also eager to proceed to a situation where children can be supported to chair and actively participate in their own reviews. We will continue to promote the choice to both children and parents.

Please note that key actions being taken to improve performance in relation to other PIs are included in the relevant section of this report.

The graphs below provide an overview of progress against Directorate Delivery Plan actions. Work to progress the Directorate Plan has continued and key areas of progress include:

- Emerging areas of risk - Think Safe service
- Promoting family stability
- Support services for care leavers (Preparation Programme / Youth gateway)
- Recommissioning Families First
- Signs of Safety

An overview of Directorate Plan actions where progress is being made, albeit not at the pace originally intended, is provided in the following table.

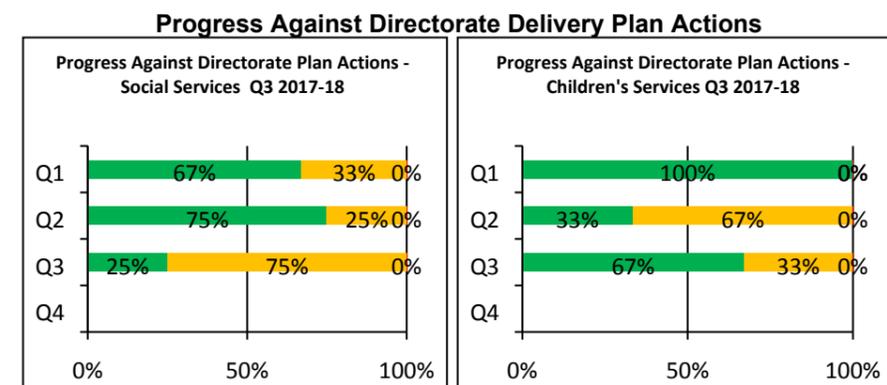


The above graphs set out progress in relation to performance indicators and actions from the Corporate Plan.

An overview of Corporate Plan actions where progress is being made, albeit not at the pace originally intended, is provided in the following table alongside a summary of PIs where Quarter 3 performance is below threshold.

PIs where performance is at target level, or between target and threshold, include:

- Allocation of children on the CPR and looked after children to social workers (100%)
- Timeliness of child protection reviews (98%)
- Looked after children placed in Cardiff (62%)



Red / Amber Actions (Directorate Plan):	
Social Services	Children's Services
Financial Strategy	Youth Offending Service
Quality Assurance	CAMHS
Directorate Posts	

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Appendix D

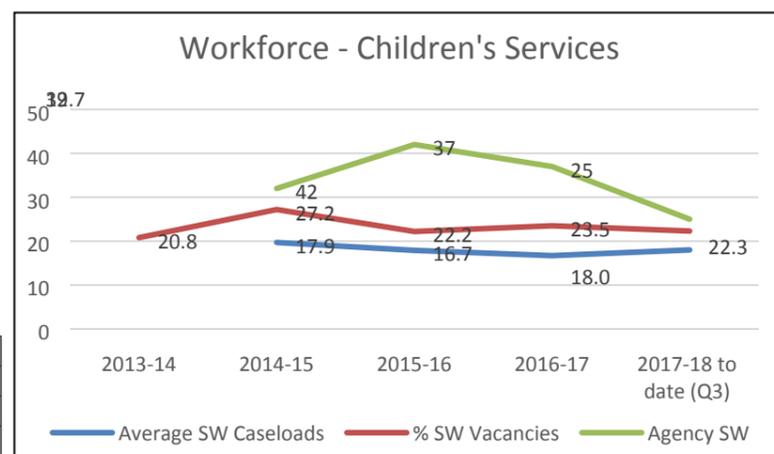
### Workforce Data:

Sickness FTE	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2017-18	2017-18 to date (Q3)	2017-18 Target
Children's Services	17.2	13.7	13.8	14.4	10.0	13.0

PPDR compliance	CS
Closure (2016-17)	98%
Initiation (2017-18)	91%
Half Year Review	95%

Total agency staff cost to date - Q3 (Including Cardiff Works)	£1,994,000 (£273,000)
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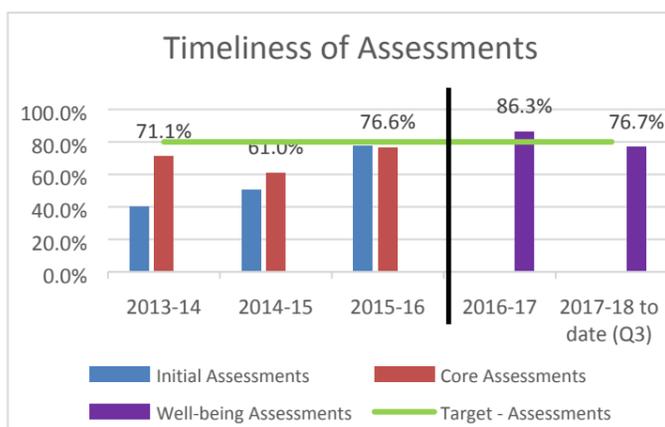
Date	25-29 cases	30+ cases
28.02.14	32	16
30.09.17	11	8
31.12.17	9	4



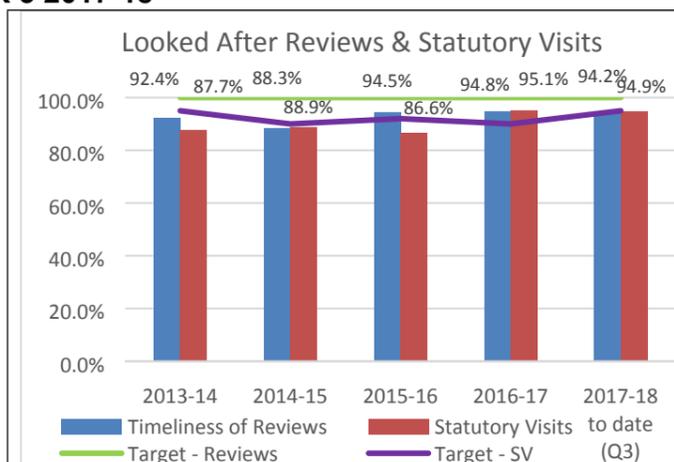
Children's Services have an FTE workforce of 415. Following a period where average social worker caseloads steadily decreased, there was an increase at the start of the year (to 19.7 in June 2017). During Quarter 3, caseloads decreased to 18.0 and the position continues to be closely monitored. Social workers with particularly high caseloads are known and arrangements have been put in place to address this - using support from other teams within the service to finalise pending case closures and / or address performance issues.

Whilst it would appear that the improving social worker vacancy position shown in Quarter 2 has not been maintained in Quarter 3, closer examination shows that some existing staff have been appointed to newly created posts, leaving their substantive posts vacant. This is, however a good news story as it reflects career progression for, and retention of, existing staff. If these posts were excluded, the PI result would be 21.1%. Addressing the vacancy position continues to be a priority and a refreshed social worker recruitment campaign is currently being developed in partnership with the communication team. The new campaign will capitalise on the recent developments which will no doubt highlight Cardiff Children's Services as an attractive place to work for social workers because:

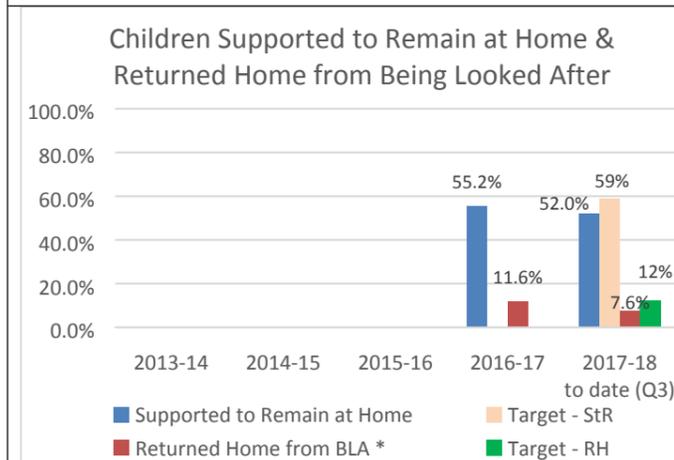
- There is a high level of support and supervision;
- There is a consistent risk management framework supported by Signs of Safety;
- Social workers will have access to the latest technology and ICT kit;
- Investment in the service will result in manageable caseloads;
- Social workers will be supported to undertake direct work with children;
- There is a consistent and stable leadership team;
- Access to professional development and training will be encouraged;
- Staff are encouraged and supported to seek promotional opportunities.



Performance in relation to timeliness of wellbeing assessments decreased in the context of a further 7% increase in the number of assessments completed (723 compared with 677 in Quarter 2 and 630 in Quarter 1). However, team managers ensure that children are seen and support services are initiated in a timely manner despite the assessment not being written up within the statutory timescales. Given the volume and complexity of assessments, the service has prioritised the importance of seeing children and initiating support for children and families whilst acknowledging that the assessment will be properly completed albeit out of timescales. Senior managers review weekly performance reports and keep a close eye on timeliness of assessments and look out for patterns which need to be addressed. Whilst the timeliness of the assessments has decreased, the Assistant Director is comfortable with the approach taken by the service and is content with the controls in place.



Performance in relation to timeliness of looked after children's reviews decreased during the quarter to 90% from 96% in Quarter 2.



Of the 1,672 children with a Care and Support Plan at 31st December 2017, 870 (52%) were being supported to live at home (i.e. were not being looked after). Of the 964 children who have been looked after during the year, 73 have returned home. This PI is cumulative, and performance will improve as we progress throughout the year.

As with initial child protection conference, performance reflects the expectation on all Independent Reviewing Officers to attend 5 day Signs of Safety training. It is also the case that resource from looked after reviews is sometimes diverted to child protection conferences to ensure that the latter proceed as planned. Of the 53 reviews that were not held on time, 21 were held within a week, 12 within 2 weeks, 5 within 3 weeks, 3 within 4 weeks, 5 within 5 weeks, 4 within 6 weeks, 2 within 7 weeks and 1 within 9 weeks.

Performance in relation to statutory visits to looked after children, however, improved to 95%, from 94% in Quarter 2. This level of performance is considered to be good in the context of the increasing number of looked after children

The reduction in children being supported to live at home in part reflects the impact of early help on the landscape of the Children's Services caseload. Children who previously would have received services from Children's Services are now being diverted to Early Help with the more complex cases receiving Children's Services interventions. This results in a "thickening of the soup" with Children's Services managing higher levels of risk.

In addition to the 73 children who were returned home from care, 108 children were actively placed in the care of their parents, but remain subject to a Care Order, and 66 children were placed with relative carers. These figures reflect the strong emphasis we have in placing children within the family but with sufficient safeguards of a Court Order. A Placement with Parents team is being established to focus on the management of these cases, and to revoke Care Orders when this is appropriate. In addition to this, a dedicated worker from the Adolescent Resource Centre has been identified to work directly with looked after children who are considered to be ready for rehabilitation home.

52 Care Proceedings were initiated in Quarter 3, and 65 were concluded. A more detailed update on the activity surrounding care proceedings will be provided at the next scrutiny committee.

### Budget update

Service	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000	Savings Shortfall £000
Children's Services	£48,707	£52,797	+£4,090	£867

Children's Services are projecting a £4.090 million overspend at month 9. This continues to be a challenge, particularly in view of the need to protect children and the associated costs of children being looked after. We currently have 1 young person placed in high cost secure accommodation, subject to a Secure Order and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, and 2 young people on the edge of secure accommodation who are currently subject to care proceedings. The anticipated savings shortfall of £867,000 largely relates to the phasing of early help initiatives. Also, the savings proposals linked to preventative measures are only serving to restrict further growth (cost avoidance) rather than producing the actual cost reductions that would have been assumed in the budget.