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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> March 2015.

**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 4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

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 4 PERFORMANCE**

9. During Quarter 4, improvement was achieved in relation to a number of key indicators. For example, recording of decisions on referrals increased from 84% in Quarter 3 to 86% in Quarter 4. This is an overall improving trend from a low of 68% in Quarter 4 2013-14. It is acknowledged that further improvement is required and work to achieve the target of 100% will be ongoing in 2015-16.
10. The percentage of referrals to the Directorate that are within a year of a previous referral decreased from 26% in Quarter 3 to 25% in Quarter 4 and performance in relation to children being seen at initial assessment improved from 56% in Quarter 3 to 62% in Quarter 4.
11. There was also continued improvement in recording of initial care plans for looked after children – performance increased to 87% from 81% in Quarter 3. This is an overall improving trend from a low of 47% in Quarter 1 2013-14. It is acknowledged that further improvement is required and work to achieve the target of 90% will be ongoing in 2015-16.
12. Performance in relation to timeliness of statutory reviews for looked after children improved steadily throughout the quarter. 96% of statutory reviews for looked after children were held within prescribed timescales in Quarter 4 compared with 88% in Quarter 3. Performance peaked at 98% in March.
13. The Youth Offending Service developed an improvement plan following dialogue with the Youth Justice Board - all action points have been implemented and the completed plan has been signed off by the Youth Offending Service (YOS) Management Board and the Youth Justice Board.
14. Timely completion of initial assessments declined from 67% in Quarter 3 to 57% in Quarter 4. The threshold for manager intervention for this PI agreed between ADSS Cymru, WLGA and CSSIW is 50%. In contrast to the 2013-14 out-turn, the service has secured improved performance in 2014-15. The 2014-15 out-turn was adversely affected by very poor performance in the first quarter and inadequate performance in the second quarter, much of which was preoccupied with clearing backlogs. Under new leadership, significantly improved performance in the second half of the year gives us confidence that we can achieve performance in excess of the Welsh

average in 2015-16 (the Welsh average in 2013-14 was 71.9%). Further detail is included in paragraph 23.

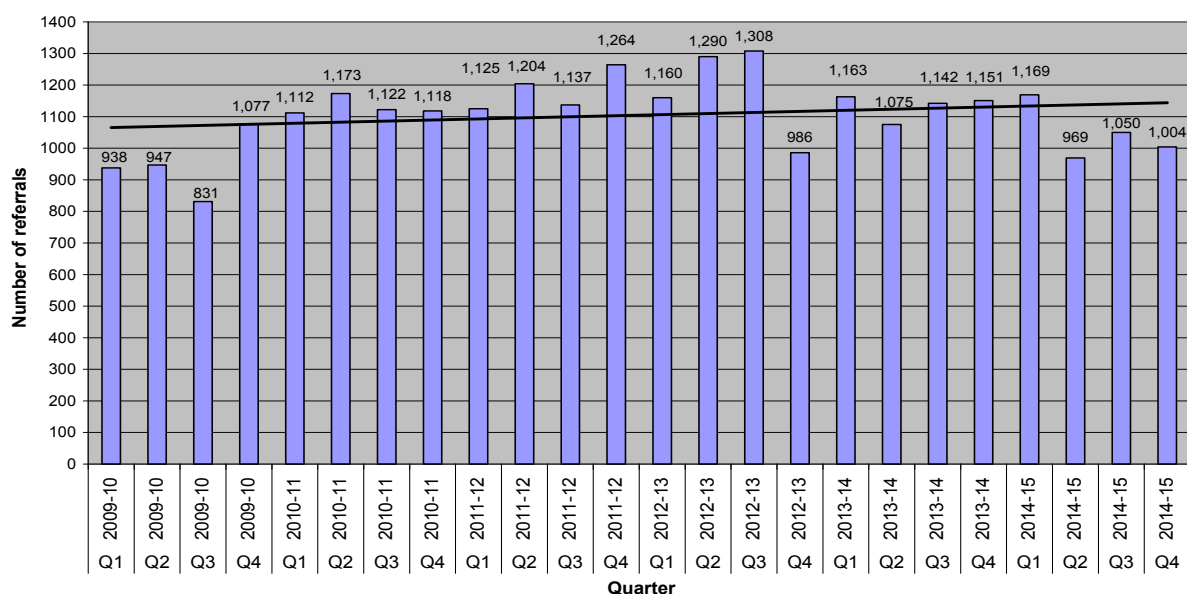
15. Timeliness of initial core groups also declined from 96% in Quarter 3 to 85% in Quarter 4 in the context of an 8% increase in the number of required initial core groups (143 from 133). This followed a 37% increase in the number of required core groups in Quarter 3 (133 from 97).
16. Work to progress the Directorate's improvement plan has continued and key areas of progress include:
  - a. Implementation of Legal Surgery.
  - b. Completion of draft Preventative Strategy and commencement of consultation.
  - c. Preparation for Contact tender completed.
  - d. Positive report following inspection of Crosslands children's home.
  - e. LAC Traineeship Scheme Co-ordinator in post.
  - f. Partnership & Integration Change Manager post established and advertised.
17. There has been some slippage in progress against some milestones including the model for managing referrals, developing a set of proposals with Health to support and improve health of LAC and care leavers and progression of the Placement Strategy. A joint inter-agency visit to Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) MASH was undertaken to view their model in practice to help determine what is required to fit the needs of Cardiff. The Health Service are leading on the remodelling of primary mental health services for Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan in respect of looked after children with Children's Services contributing as and when required. In relation to the Placement Strategy (now renamed as the Looked After Children Strategy), the report of the externally commissioned research to analyse LAC pressures will be presented to Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee in Quarter 1 2015-16. The key ingredients for bringing together a coherent LAC Strategy are in place, including:
  - Research into drivers of growth completed
  - Payment by Results tender awarded
  - Dedicated LAC Service established
  - Best practice training completed

## DETAILED COMMENTARY

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

18. Children's Services received 1,004 referrals in Quarter 4 (Referrals 1) compared with 1,050 in Quarter 3. A detailed breakdown of contacts and referrals is provided at **Appendix C** for the Committee's information. This report shows the source of the 7,539 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 1,004 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) was 25.4% from 25.6% in Quarter 3.

Referrals to Children's Services



19. In relation to the recording of decisions on referrals (SCC/006), performance improved slightly in Quarter 4 to 85.5% (858 / 1,004) from 83.7% (879 / 1,050) in Quarter 3. It is acknowledged that further improvement is required and work to achieve this will be ongoing in 2015-16. 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.

20. The Director of Children's Services organised a joint visit with the Police, Health and Probation to the Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) MASH for 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and received a presentation from RCT colleagues. This provided significant encouragement that MASH presents a strong and effective partnership model for jointly managing risk and referral taking in relation to children at the front door. Key features include:

- Co-location of inter-agency staff (70 in total in RCT)
- Shared intelligence and information systems
- Common goals and practices
- Strong inter-agency governance

RCT have been invited to present on the RCT MASH at the Cardiff & Vale LSB on 5<sup>th</sup> May – this is to be confirmed at the time of writing.

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

Source of Referrals	Q4
Ambulance Service	0
Central Government Agency	4
Family, Friend or Neighbour	40
Housing	0
Independent Provider Agency	0

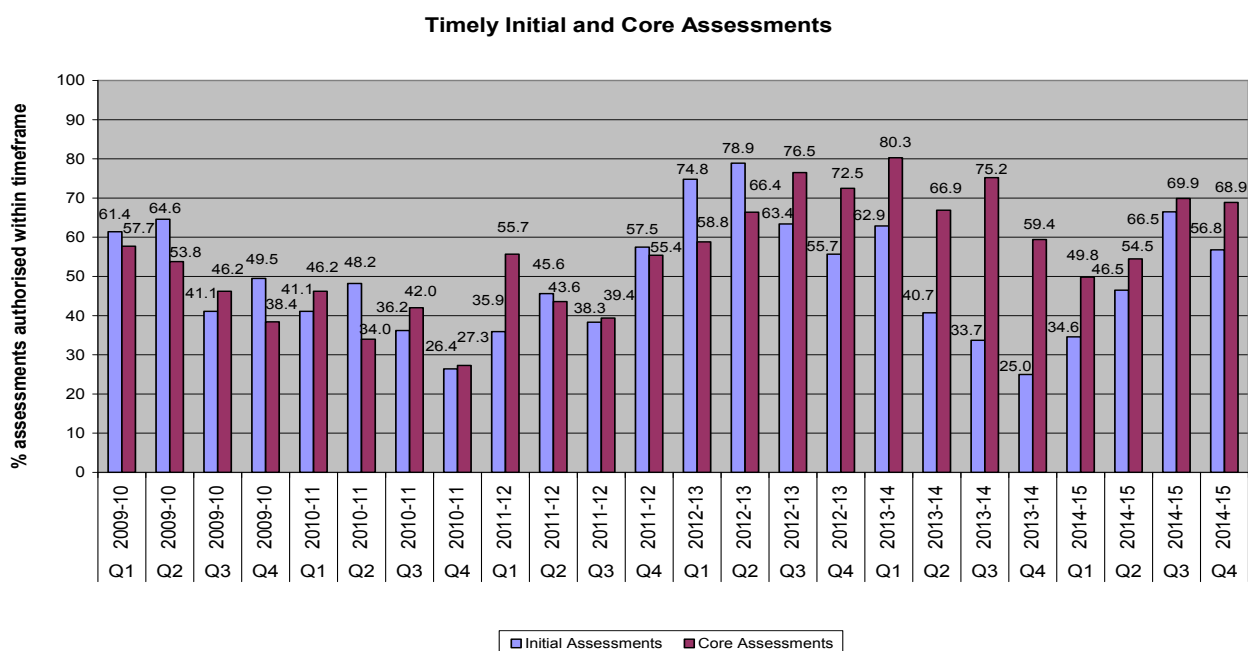
LA Housing Dept. or Housing Association	19
Local Authority's own Social Services Department	122
Other Agency	104
Other Departments of Own or Other LA	54
Other Individual	2
Other Social Services Department	0
Other Type	0
Police	220
Primary Health / Community Health	160
Probation Service	23
School	198
Secondary Health	56
Self Referral	1
UK Border Agency	1
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1,004</u></b>

22. Outcome of referrals – 86.2% (865 / 1,004) of referrals were allocated to a social worker for initial assessment in Quarter 4 compared with 92.5% (971 / 1,050) in Quarter 3 (SCC/007a). 7.8% (78 / 1,004) of referrals were allocated to other grades of worker for initial assessment compared with 5.4% (57 / 1,050) in Quarter 3. 4.7% (47 / 1,004) 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 56.8% (497 / 875) from 66.5% (654 / 983) in Quarter 3 (SCC/042a). Quarter 4 was a particularly challenging quarter for the Intake & Assessment (I&A) Service. The Service experienced an increase in the number of staff on maternity leave and long term sick leave, along with an increase in general sick leave during the period. Caseloads increased from 17.1 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 to 21.0 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, partly as a result of I&A teams holding onto cases for longer in support of the managed team exit strategy. Due to the complexity of some of these cases, they warrant more social work intervention than is the norm for an intake team. The threshold for manager intervention for this PI agreed between ADSS Cymru, WLGA and CSSIW is 50%. In contrast to the 2013-14 outturn, the service has secured improved performance in 2014-15. The 2014-15 outturn was adversely affected by very poor performance in the first quarter and inadequate performance in the second quarter, much of which was preoccupied with clearing backlogs. Under new leadership, significantly improved performance in the second half of the year gives us confidence that we can achieve performance in excess of the Welsh average in 2015-16 (the Welsh average in 2013-14 was 71.9%).
24. 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.

25. 61.6% (539 / 875) of children were seen by a social worker during their initial assessment compared with 56.5% (555 / 983) in Quarter 3 (SCC/011a). Inclusion of children seen by a Children's Services worker other than a social worker increases the percentage of children seen to 69.0% (604 / 875).
26. The percentage of initial assessments where information regarding ethnicity, religion and first language were recorded during Quarter 4 is as follows:
  - a. Ethnicity – 72.2% (632 / 875)
  - b. Religion – 36.8% (322 / 875)
  - c. First language – 56.2% (492 / 875)

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.

27. Performance in relation to timely completion of core assessments was 68.9% (365 / 530) in Quarter 4 compared with 69.9% (438 / 627) in Quarter 3 (SCC/043a). The 2014-15 outturn was adversely affected by inadequate performance in the first half of the year, with stronger performance in the second half of the year. The impact of successful recruitment and more stable frontline leadership puts the service in a stronger position to achieve the Welsh average in 2015-16 (the Welsh average in 2013-14 was 81.2%). A graph displaying timely completion of (initial and) core assessments is included below.

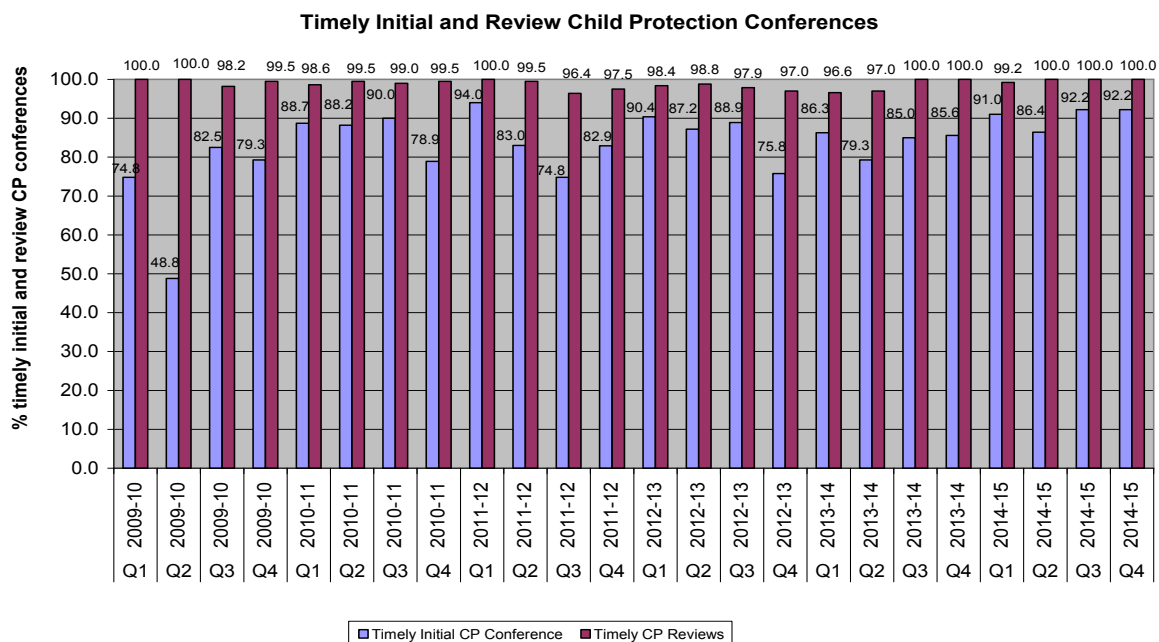


## B) SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

28. The number of children on the child protection register at the end of Quarter 4 was 255 (from 297 at the end of Quarter 3) (CS CPR 4).
29. 92.2% (119 / 129) of initial child protection conferences took place within the 15 working day timescale in Quarter 4 – static from 92.2% (154 / 167) in Quarter 3 (SCC/014). Performance has been maintained in Quarter 4 and the 90% target has

been met for both the quarter and the year.

30. Timeliness of review child protection conferences remained at 100.0% (290 / 290) in Quarter 4 in the context of a 22% increase in the number of required child protection reviews (290 from 237 in Quarter 3). Performance against initial and review child protection conferences is displayed in the graph below:

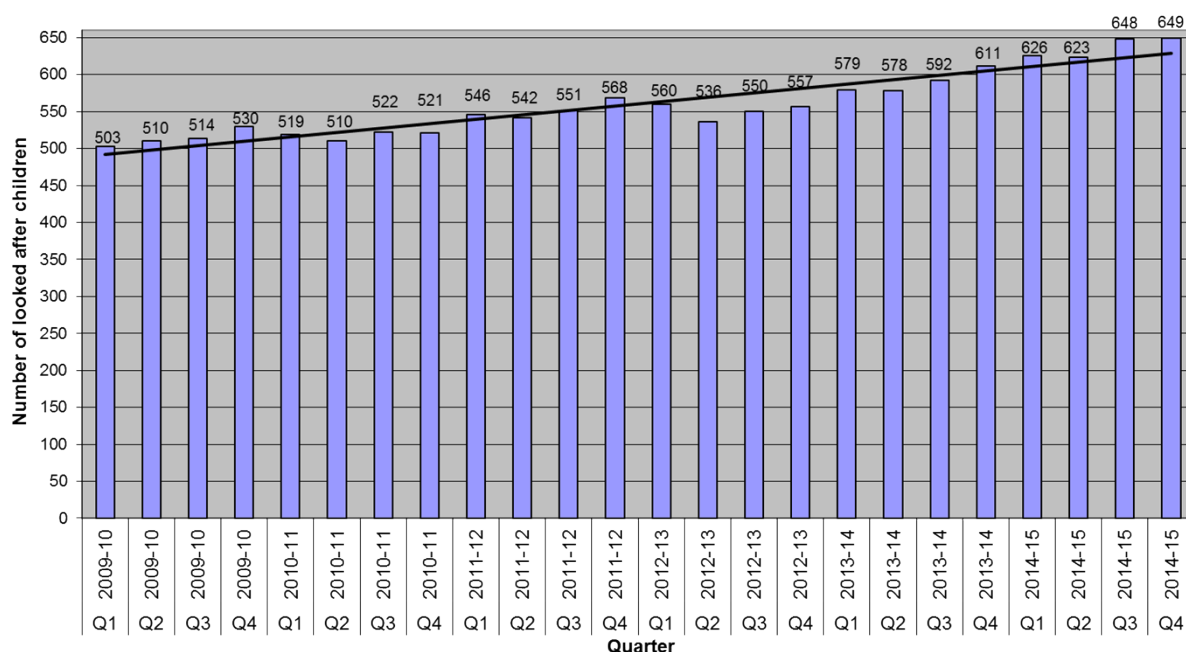


31. Initial core groups took place within the 10 working day timescale in 84.6% (121 / 143) of cases in Quarter 4 compared with 95.5% (127 / 133) in Quarter 3 (SCC/015). The decrease in performance is in the context of an 8% increase in the number of required initial core groups (143 from 133). This followed a 37% increase in the number of required core groups in Quarter 3 (133 from 97).
32. 100% (297 / 297) of children on the child protection register had an allocated social worker at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.
33. 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**

34. The number of children who were looked after at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 (not including those children being looked after as part of a respite care arrangement) was 649 compared with 648 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 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.

Number of Looked After Children



35. Initial care plans were in place prior to children becoming looked after in 86.8% (59 / 68) of cases during Quarter 4, compared with 80.6% (83 / 103) in Quarter 3 (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.
36. 93.3% (42 / 45) of permanence plans were in place by second looked after review in January and February, compared with 81.8% (45 / 55) in Quarter 3 (SCC/001b).
37. 71.8% (380 / 529) of looked after children were placed with independent sector providers at the end of Quarter 4 (CS LAC 44), a small increase on Quarter 3 which was 71.1% (367 / 516). The number of children placed in independent sector residential placements remained static at 59.
38. 60.7% (321 / 529) of children in regulated placements were placed in Cardiff at the end of Quarter 4 compared with 61.4% (317 / 516) at the end of Quarter 3 (CS LAC 58). A further 103 children placed outside Cardiff were within 20 miles of their home address. 5 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.
39. Performance in relation to timeliness of statutory reviews for looked after children improved steadily throughout the quarter. 95.7% (435 / 486) of statutory reviews for looked after children were held within prescribed timescales in Quarter 4 compared with 87.7% (429 / 489) in Quarter 3 (SCC/021). Performance peaked at 98% (199 / 203) in March. 90.8% (257 / 283) of statutory visits were held in accordance with regulations in January and February compared with 87.9% (430 / 489) in Quarter 3



(SCC/025).

40. 99.7% (640 / 642) looked after children were allocated to a social worker at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. The 2 children who were not allocated to a social worker at 31<sup>st</sup> March have since been re-allocated.

## **YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE**

41. The numbers of First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) has decreased during Quarter 4 to 21 (from 32 in Quarter 3).
42. The re-offending toolkit has been in use since Quarter 2. Further work is needed in order to input all data (a lengthy manual exercise) and to determine how the toolkit can then be kept up to date.
43. The Youth Offending Service developed an improvement plan following dialogue with the Youth Justice Board - all action points have been implemented and the completed plan has been signed off by the Youth Offending Service (YOS) Management Board and the Youth Justice Board.
44. The National Thematic Inspection of Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents visited Cardiff in December 2014, having visited 30 sites in England and Wales in total. The focus of the inspection was to consider Cardiff's application of an Extended Learning Review (ELR) following the suicide of a young person in February 2013. Feedback included the following:
  - Recognition that the process had demonstrated strong partnership working between Children's Services and YOS.
  - Recognition that the process was appropriately sighted and owned by the YOS Management Board and LSCB.
  - Recognition that all of the above was underpinned and evidenced by a clear audit trail at each point and site of governance.
  - Cardiff was alone amongst the 30 sites visited nationally in applying best practice in relation to the ELR.
45. Work to explore the potential for further cohesion between the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and the Youth Offending Service (YOS) Prevention Policy and Practice Guidelines in the context of a YOS restructure and collaborative working with the Vale of Glamorgan will be taken forward in 2015-16.

## **STAFFING**

46. The percentage of social worker vacancies in Quarter 4 was 24.8% compared with 25.3% in Quarter 3 (Staff 1). The vacancy position has improved very 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. Vacancies were not actively recruited to in some teams while plans for restructuring were

developed.

47. The impact of the Managed Team enabled the service to reduce the overall number of cases from 2,953 at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 to 2,251 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, bringing social worker caseloads in Children's Services teams down from 24.5 at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 to 19.7 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. This is a slight increase on the caseload average of 18.4 that was reported at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.
48. The percentage sickness for Children's Services in Quarter 4 was 7.2% (1,529.0 / 21,179.4) compared with 4.8% (1,026.5 / 21,250.2) in Quarter 3. Sickness levels continue to be closely monitored to ensure that appropriate action is taken to manage sickness absence across the service area.
49. 88% compliance with finalisation of objective sheets, 83% compliance with 6 monthly reviews and 37% compliance with PPDR completion 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**

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

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

51. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend, but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet / Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

52. 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 Children's Services**  
**30 April 2015**