

# Children's Services Performance Report – Children Looked After Quarter 1 2019-20



## Executive Summary

### What's working well?

- Soft launch of **Early Help Gateway** in April - recruitment process for Family Support element of the Cardiff Family Advice Service completed and staff training and development is in progress. Staff morale is good and positive feedback has been received from families. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) visited the Family Support Service in April 2019. The feedback received in their annual letter noted that "early help preventative measures had undergone significant development over the past 12 months ... We observed a team culture where the voice of the child is central to practice. We heard about work with families where positive outcomes were achieved, and saw examples of extremely positive feedback from families who had received interventions."
- **Children's Services Strategy "Delivering Excellent Outcomes"** developed with engagement with children and young people from the Bright Start Forum, 11 Plus Team and the Adolescent Resource Centre in readiness for consideration by Cabinet early in Quarter 2.
- **Fostering Fortnight** was held during Quarter 1 to raise awareness of the in house fostering service and recruit new foster carers to Cardiff. At present, the number of children in in house fostering remains relatively stable, although the number of enquiries has increased - there were 15 full assessments ongoing at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

### What are we worried about?

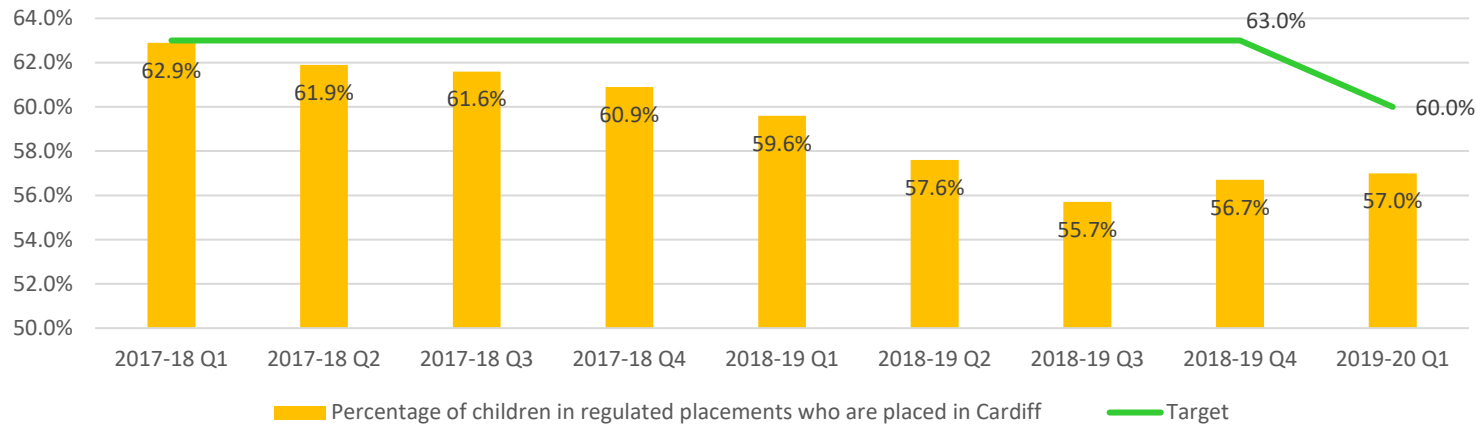
- The **interface and relationship between MASH / Support4Families and Family Help / Gateway** needs strengthening to ensure consistent and correct step up and step down mechanisms.
- More work to do fully embed **rights and participation** in everything we do from practice to strategy and to communicate effectively.
- Supply of the **right type of services** for our most vulnerable children, including the lack of appropriate placement provision, scarcity of residential and foster care provision in a timely way to meet the needs of children and young people with more complex needs.
- **Social Worker vacancies in Children's Services** - for Quarter 1 stand at 31.6% and result in an over reliance on agency social workers.
- Capacity within the **Independent Reviewing Officer Service** to complete timely children looked after review reports is challenging.
- **Challenges in the Children Looked After Service** as the service prepares to move into a locality model.
- Management of **demand and complexity** of caseloads.
- Numbers of **children waiting for adoption** 12 months after Placement Order made (51, 31 of whom are not yet placed).

## What do we need to do?

- Continue to work with the Institute of Public Care to explore **best practice procedures** and embed these into the service.
- Implement the **Mind Of My Own app** which will give young people an instant and convenient way to express their views, wishes and feelings, and social workers a smart way to record them.
- Implement the priorities in the **Commissioning Strategy**, including development of emergency placement options.
- A post to drive forward **recruitment and retention** was recruited to during Quarter 1 and a second post that will focus on workforce planning activities was also appointed to in the same recruitment process. Staff will be in post in Quarter 2 to support the delivery of the recruitment and retention strategy. New **secondment scheme** has been introduced with very good progress made - additional places have been offered and taken up by unqualified staff wishing to undertake the social work degree.
- **Independent Reviewing Officer service** action plan under review.
- Proposal being developed to address **challenges in the Children Looked After Service** by bringing in a targeted team to take cases of workers who are on sick or maternity leave or otherwise not covered. This will relieve the pressure on duty and support social workers to ensure that existing care plans are up to date and reflect the needs of the young person.
- Continue embedding **Signs of Safety**.
- Adoption Services now have a clearer understanding of the **children on Placement Orders** where plans need to be reviewed. We also are now more effectively utilising early linking and matching tools to ensure harder to place children can be placed within families earlier.
- Implement **new staffing structure and locality working**.

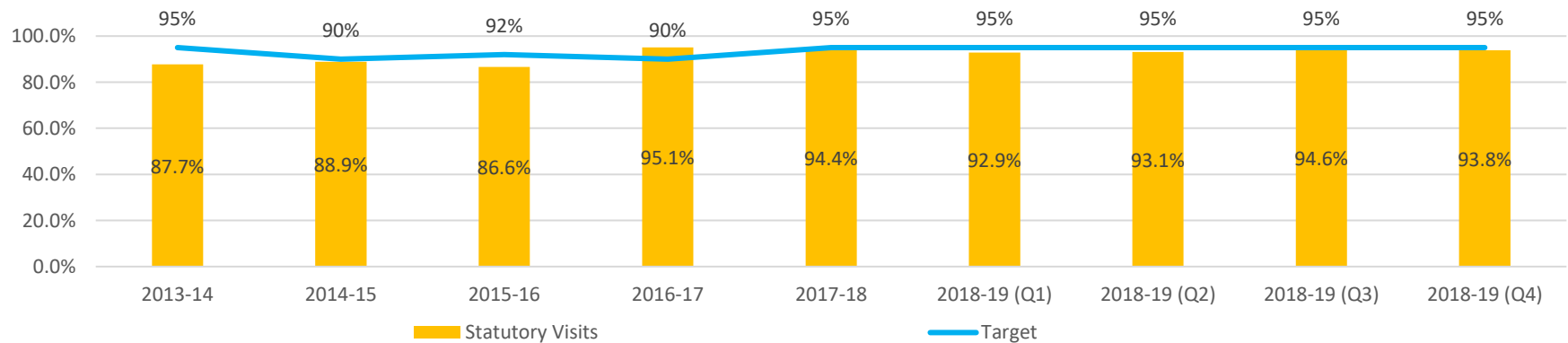
## Key Performance Indicators

### CS LAC 58 Percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff



CS LAC 58 The percentage of **children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff** = 57.0% (385 / 676) The PI counts only children placed within the LA boundaries and excludes children placed in neighbouring authorities close to their home area and attending Cardiff schools. Please see page 23 for a breakdown of placements.

### SCC/025 The percentage of statutory visits to children looked after due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations



N.B. Quarter 4 2018/19 data is provisional, Quarter 1 2019/20 is pending

## Children Looked After

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children Looked After (CLA) service has started operating as one service, no longer 0-14 and 14+, this gives them more cohesion and removes the transfer of young people to a new social worker at age 14.</li> <li>Expertise is developing within the CLA service in readiness for the move to locality teams. Workers are starting to specialise in areas such as working with young men on the edge of homelessness, Child Sexual Exploitation and supporting children to know how to protect themselves, and adoption / life story work. These specialist workers will work alongside case managers to enrich the team and support case managers to have confidence with challenging work. Also intended that this will support targeted interventions to expedite safe return home for CLA.</li> <li>Cardiff are the lead authority for a new Personal Adviser group that has been started up in the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff area to share good practice across the region. The group was set up by Cardiff to facilitate discussion with other Local Authorities to explore best practice. The</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delay in updating CareFirst when children become looked after / change placement. This needs to be resolved to ensure whereabouts of child are up to date and accurate and to support the development of real time reporting.</li> <li>Supply of the right type of services for our most vulnerable children, including scarcity of fostering and residential provision for children and young people with more complex needs. This has resulted in a high number of children and young people placed out of area and children being placed in inappropriate provision, e.g. 14 out of 36 new agency residential placements from January – June 2019 were because no fostering placements were available. This has a significant impact on the Children's Services overspend.</li> <li>Processes to step children down from being looked after need further development.</li> <li>High numbers of children looked after placed with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice guidance for social workers under development. Management instruction to be issued.</li> <li>Implement the priorities in the Commissioning Strategy, including development of emergency placement options.</li> <li>Systematically review out of area placements, agency placements and in house fostering placements.</li> <li>Shift the balance of care to ensure that children's needs are met with the lowest safe level of statutory intervention.</li> <li>Review systems in place to ensure all opportunities for family (kinship) placements are explored.</li> <li>Senior managers to meet with providers to shape the market.</li> <li>Implement reunification planning – work scheduled to start in Quarter 2.</li> <li>Dedicated team to review placements with parents will be at full complement in Quarter 2.</li> </ul>

<p>other authorities are looking to Cardiff who have made some really positive developments in this area recently, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Group of care experienced mums supported to set up their own Mother and Baby group.</li> <li>○ Work being undertaken with the Department for Work and Pensions regarding Universal Credit and entitlements for young people.</li> <li>○ Work to teach life skills and support independence for care leavers; currently using limited facilities available at Hafan Gobaith; hoping to expand this work when PA Service moves to the Adolescent Service.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Comms supporting the recruitment of foster carers with increased media activity on various social platforms (15 full assessments ongoing at the end of Quarter 1).</li> <li>• Improved performance management of Fostering Services via monthly performance reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanency planning for children and young people is under developed.</li> <li>• Numbers of children waiting for adoption 12 months after Placement Order made (51, 31 of whom are not yet placed).</li> <li>• Delay in obtaining Adoption Orders for children placed for adoption.</li> <li>• A number of children with significant needs are not receiving the right education provision - this is more problematic for children placed out of county.</li> <li>• Links need to be made with learning development and training academy to further promote the educational and vocational attainment potential of every care leaver.</li> <li>• Challenges in the Children Looked After Service as the service prepares to move into a locality model resulting in the percentage of children looked after allocated to a social worker falling from 100% to 97.7% at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019.</li> <li>• Need to ensure correct recording of school information on CareFirst in readiness of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop robust permanency planning arrangements.</li> <li>• We now have a clearer understanding of the children on Placement Orders where plans need to be reviewed. We also are now more effectively utilising early linking and matching tools to ensure harder to place children can be placed within families earlier.</li> <li>• Systems are under development to capture this information at review to reduce drift.</li> <li>• Joint Children's Services and Education Management meetings to be introduced to dovetail education into our planning at earlier stages within the child's journey and support effective monitoring of this.</li> <li>• A strategy to engage and disseminate what needs to happen will be formulated to ensure that educational and training need and unmet need are addressed at the earliest opportunity.</li> <li>• Proposal being developed to address challenges in the Children Looked After Service by bringing in a targeted team to take cases of workers who are on sick or maternity leave or otherwise not covered. This will relieve the pressure on duty and support social workers to ensure that existing care plans are up to date and reflect the needs of the young person.</li> </ul>
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	<p>transfer responsibility for PEPs to Education in September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The following are unavailable this quarter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of parent / person with PR who were engaged regarding their child's looked after review.</li> <li>% of children/ young people who were engaged regarding their looked after review.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address delays in minutes being completed for children looked after reviews.</li> <li>Develop a clear plan around how we intend to engage with children and young people and their families and how we can support meaningful participation. We can link this into the Child Friendly Cities programme.</li> </ul>
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## Key Stats

934 children looked after.

71 starts of being looked after this quarter.

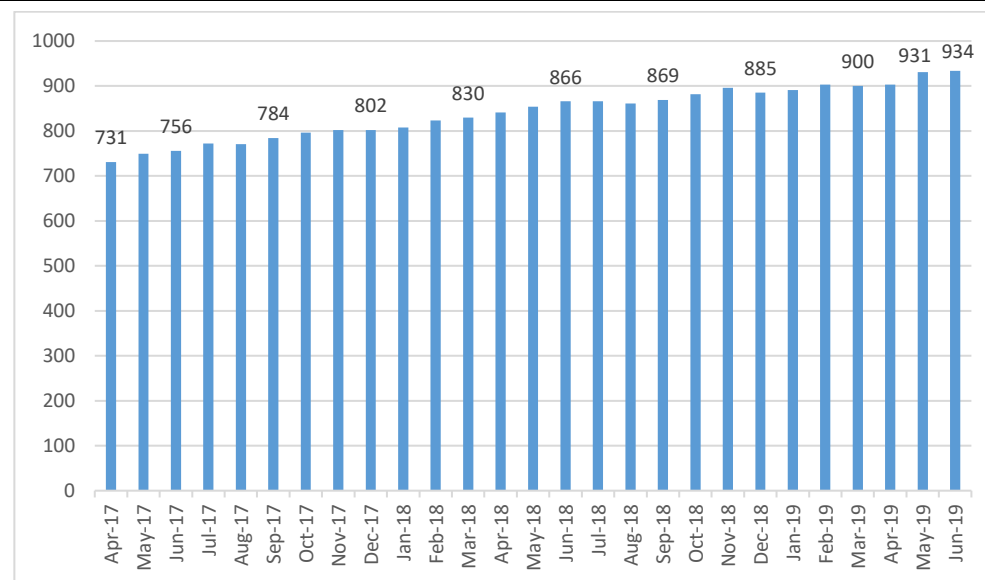
39 ends of being looked after this quarter.

385/ 676 (57.0%) children looked after in regulated placements are placed within Cardiff, increasing to 78.1% when taking neighbouring authorities into consideration.

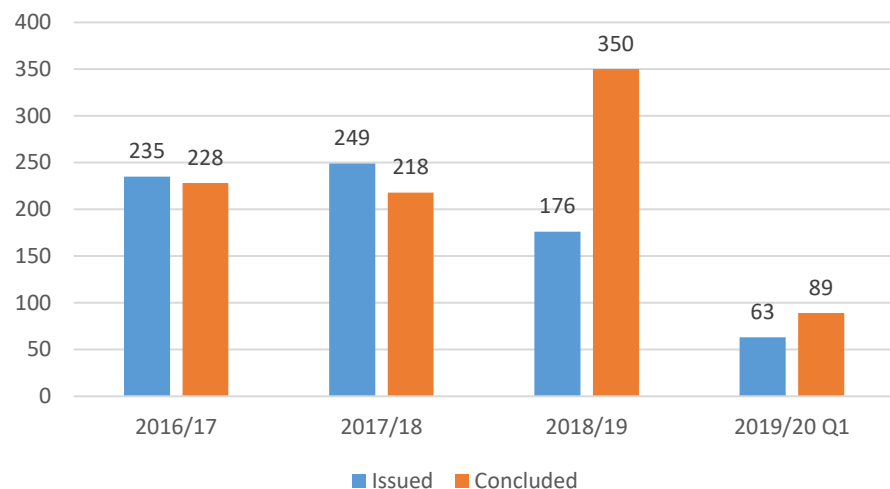
97.7% of children looked after allocated to a social worker.

Permanence secured for 7 children through adoption since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

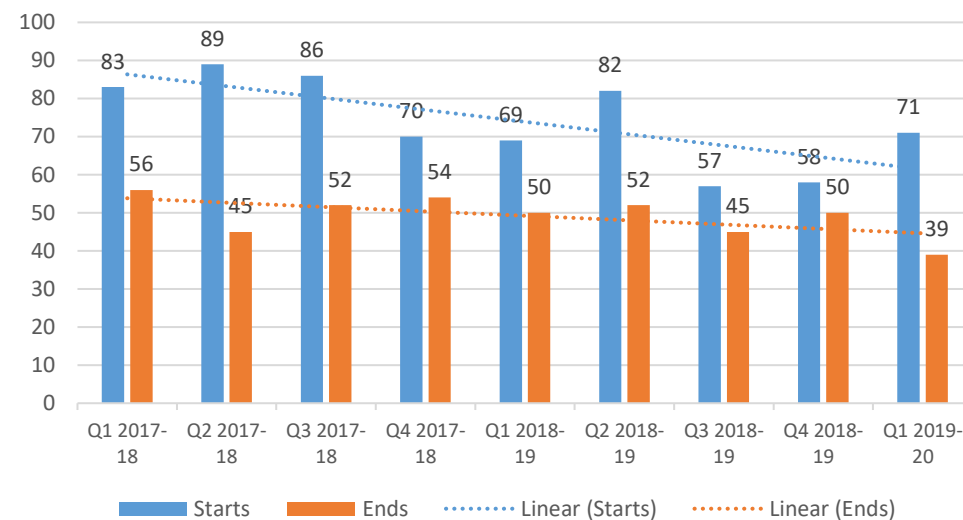
## Number of children looked after



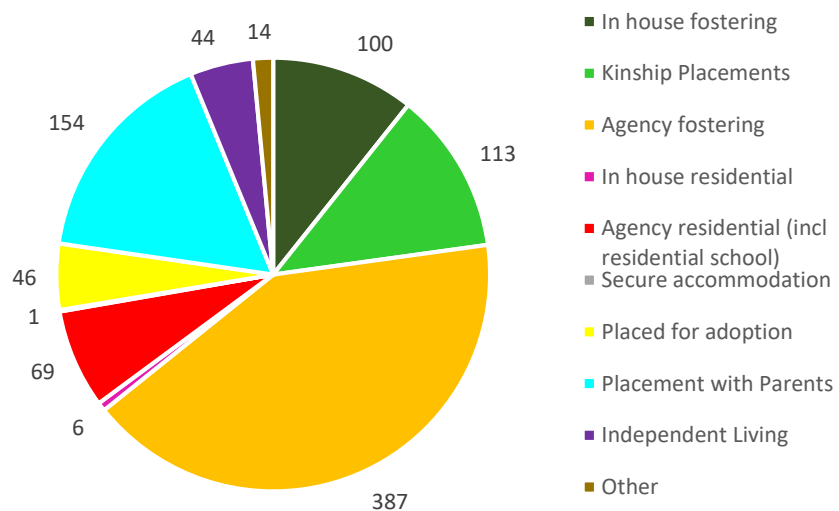
## Care Proceedings issued and concluded during year



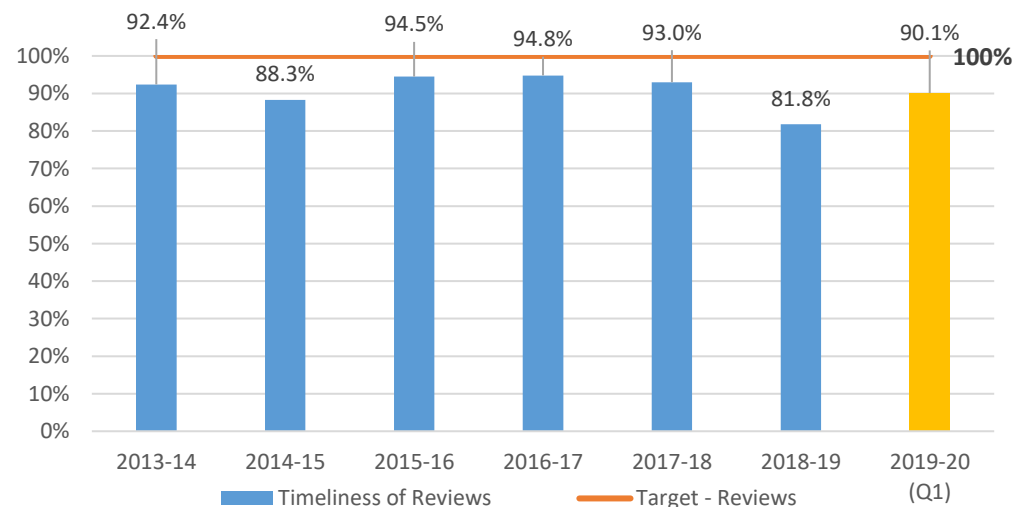
## Starts and ends of being looked after



## Breakdown of placements by type



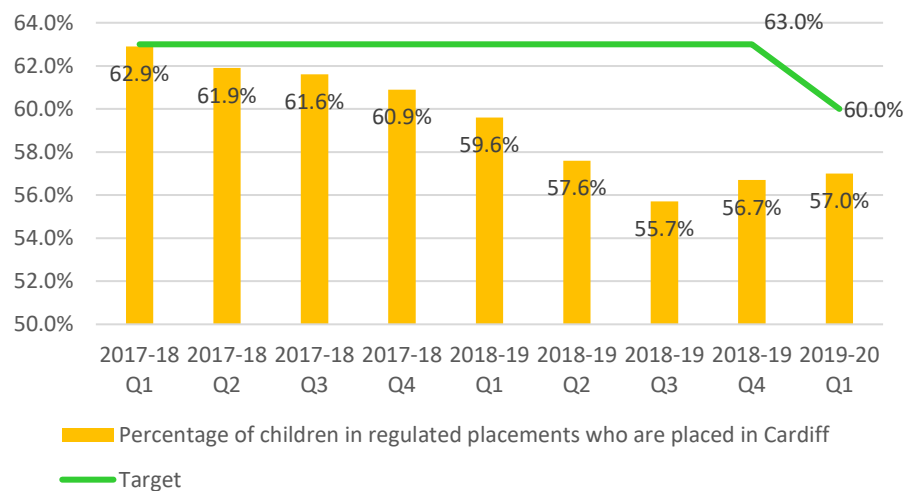
## Timeliness of Children Looked After Reviews



N.B. Quarter 1 2019/20 data is provisional



## Percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff



## Breakdown of all children in regulated placements

