

# Children's Services Performance Report – Children Looked After Quarter 3 2019-20



## Executive Summary

### What's working well?

- The Cardiff and Vale **Regional Safeguarding Board Awards** evening was held in November. This was a successful event and the Adolescent Service won an award recognising the commitment of the staff in the service. The annual **Bright Sparks awards** were also held during the quarter and were once again a success, celebrating the achievements of our children who are looked after and care leavers.
- Approximately 120 of our children went to **Winter Wonderland** and the sheer joy was inspiring. In addition to this, young people from the Youth Offending Service made and sold **Christmas wreaths** and spent the proceeds on gifts for our care leavers.
- The **Adolescent Resource Centre** has been developed to provide a regional service and is now operating jointly with the Vale of Glamorgan. The soft launch will take place early in Quarter 4.

### What are we worried about?

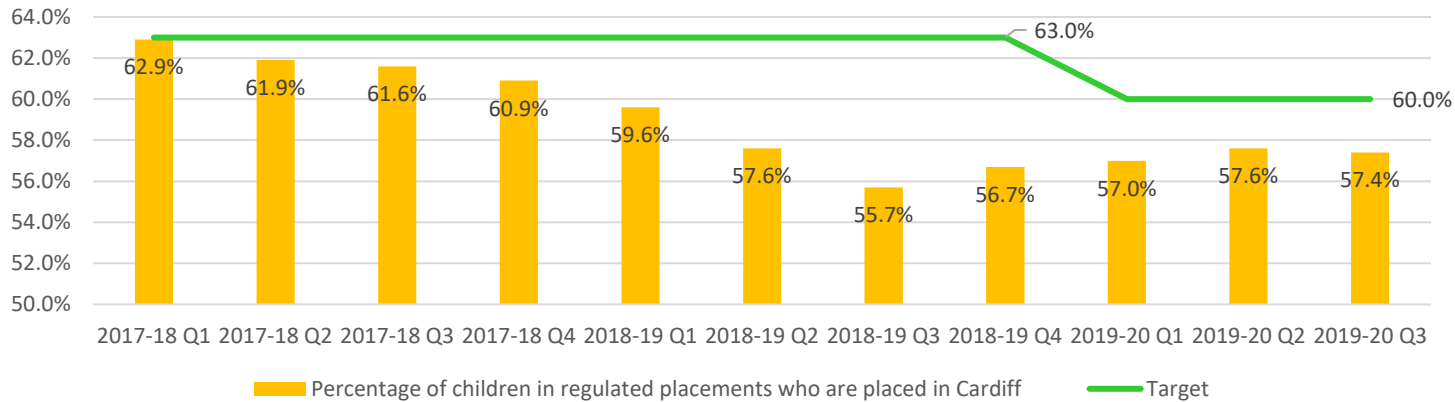
- **Performance in Children's Services** continues to be closely monitored and the number of children looked after continues to be a concern (972 at 31<sup>st</sup> December from 885 at the end of Quarter 3 2018-19). This does, however, include increasing numbers of children in kinship and family placements. A further area of concern is monitoring the timeliness of children looked after reviews and statutory visits has been affected in recent quarters by recording issues in the review team. However, focussed work has had an impact and improvement is anticipated by year end.
- **Children's Services workforce** – recruitment to vacant social worker posts is ongoing, but progress continues to be slow. The Children's Services vacancy position for the quarter is 32.9%, with 185.5 / 563.7 posts vacant in December.
- Resource to meet demand following the planned implementation of the **Extended Entitlement** of care leavers.

### What do we need to do?

- **Key priority actions are underway in 4 key areas** – placements / fostering, accommodation and delivery of the assessment unit, practice and workforce.
  - **Fostering** – conversion of 31 currently ongoing full assessments to approved foster carers.
  - **Assessment unit** – delivery by October 2020.
  - **Practice** – quality assurance and performance in key areas.
  - **Children's Services workforce** – implement market supplement by April 2020 whilst longer term proposals are developed to retain social workers in Cardiff, through ensuring competitive rates of pay and ensuring that social workers are fully supported.
- **Extended Entitlement** of care leavers - work in relation to the proposal will take into account the existing structure and capacity of the service to meet the requirements of the proposed new duty.

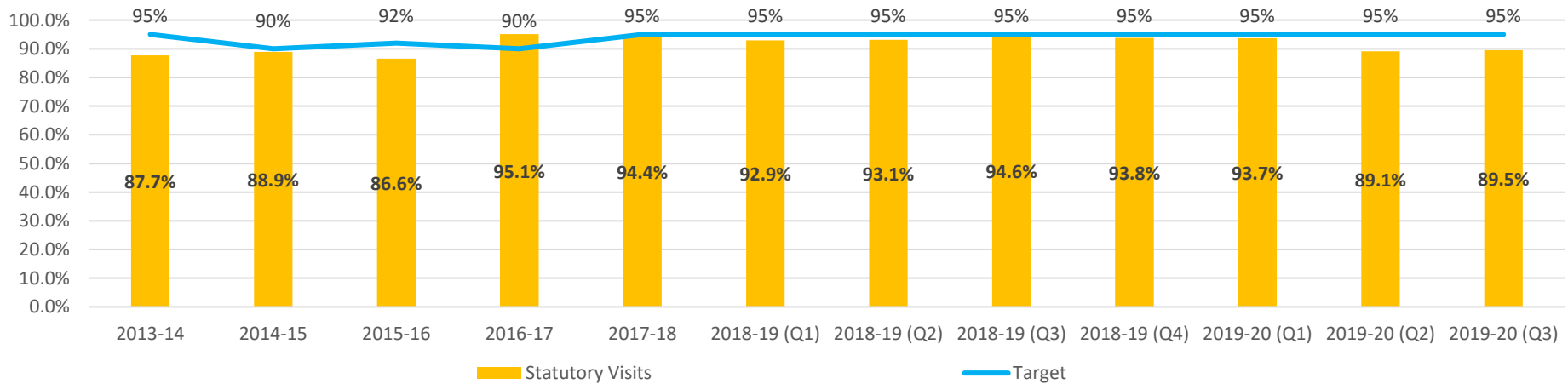
# Key Performance Indicators

## 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** = 57.4% (399 / 695). 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 7 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. Data for 2019/20 is provisional

## 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's Commissioning Strategy was presented to Cabinet in November 2019. The Strategy evidences our need and sets out our direction of travel for the next 3 years.</li> <li>• Social media and online marketing is impacting on the volume of enquiries (31 full assessments ongoing at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019).</li> <li>• Meetings with fostering and residential providers to look at improving the provisions for children looked after in Cardiff.</li> <li>• Work to develop a small emergency unit is being taken forward alongside work to open an assessment unit. One property has been identified with Housing and another is being sourced.</li> <li>• Engagement with residential providers is very positive with lots of interest in setting up new homes in Cardiff.</li> <li>• A Marketing Officer for adoption has been appointed and a process is in place with a timely response.</li> <li>• Compliance with Court timescales remains good and we are continuing to work on a practice guidance document for social workers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of children looked after continues to be a concern (972 at 31<sup>st</sup> December from 885 at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019).</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.</li> <li>• Monitoring the timeliness of children looked after reviews and statutory visits has been affected in recent quarters by recording issues in the review team.</li> <li>• Work needs to be progressed with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in Cardiff in relation to fostering and adoption.</li> <li>• All young people need to have their Pathway Plan reviewed and updated into the new format by the end of March 2020.</li> <li>• Challenges in securing the right accommodation to ensure that care leavers accommodation needs are fully met.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the priorities in the Children's Commissioning Strategy, including conversion of 31 currently ongoing full assessments to approved foster carers and delivery of an assessment unit.</li> <li>• Focused work has had an impact and the backlog has reduced considerably. Accurate reporting will be available when the backlog has been cleared.</li> <li>• Focus more on faith groups and minority ethnic groups and improve links with partner agencies to improve the choice for Cardiff children needing to be placed out of area.</li> <li>• Work is in progress.</li> <li>• Move on from Young Person Gateway is consistently being reviewed with support being offered from Housing Options Centre to move clients who are considered suitable for Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation into this type of accommodation. A Children's Services guarantee scheme is being finalised which will further assist care leavers to secure suitable</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot with the Child and Family Court Advisory Support Service to accelerate the discharge of Care Orders where parents are in agreement. The intention is for children who are looked after under Placement with Parent Regulations to cease being looked after where it is safe and appropriate to do so.</li> <li>• The Personal Adviser Service is now under the Adolescent Service following the restructure. This allows for a more robust and cohesive service that effectively engages with partners to share resources, and ensure a more effective transition for care leavers.</li> <li>• There are strong links between the Adolescent Service and the Into Work Service, with referrals being made to allow care leavers opportunities to access education, training and employment.</li> <li>• Consistent representation at Housing Panels to ensure accommodation needs of care leavers are met and effectively monitored.</li> <li>• Revised Pathway Plan in place.</li> <li>• The annual Bright Sparks awards were held and were once again a success, celebrating the achievements of our children who are looked after and care leavers.</li> <li>• Youth Offending Service made and sold Christmas wreaths and spent the proceeds on gifts for our care leavers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource to meet demand following the planned implementation of the Extended Entitlement of care leavers.</li> <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 (65, 21 of whom are not yet placed). Although there is a reduction from Quarter 2 when there were 68, children; 28 of whom were not placed).</li> <li>• Delay in completing the review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>PRS accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is ongoing and will take into account the existing structure and capacity of the service to meet the requirements of the proposed new duty.</li> <li>• Develop robust permanency planning arrangements.</li> <li>• A Marketing Officer for adoption has been appointed and a process is in place with a timely response. We are building information about where enquiries are coming from to inform our recruitment and with the aim of increasing appropriate enquiries that convert to applications.</li> <li>• Engagement session planned for Quarter 4 so children and young people can be actively involved in the review of the Strategy.</li> </ul>
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## Key Stats

972 children looked after.

88 children started to be looked after in the quarter (up from 66 in Quarter 2). These children comprised of 15 sibling groups and 51 individuals. The average number of children starting to be looked after was 1.33 (1.55 in Quarter 2 and 1.34 in 2018-19).

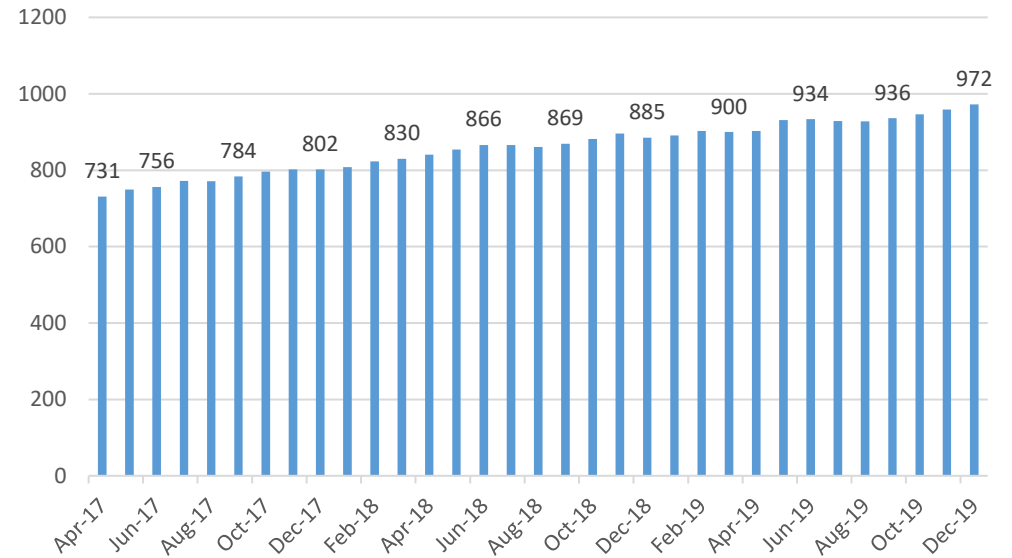
55 ends of being looked after this quarter.

399/ 695 (57.4%) children looked after in regulated placements are placed within Cardiff, increasing to 77.0% when taking neighbouring authorities into consideration.

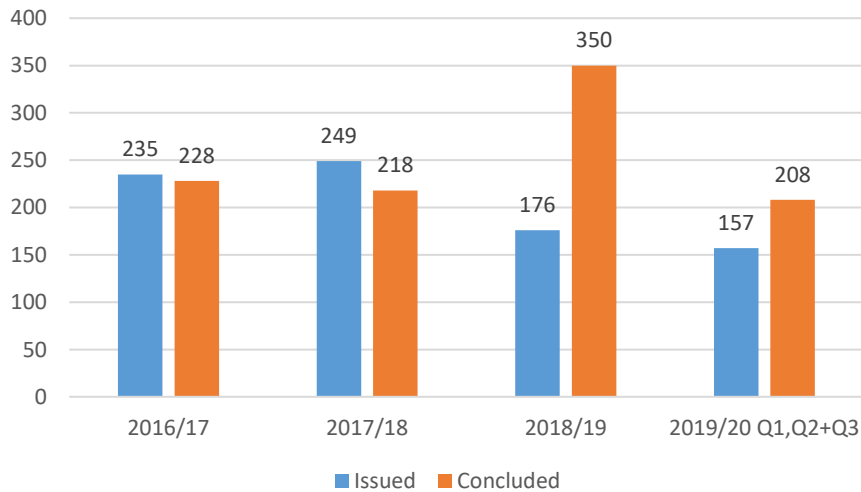
99.1% of children looked after allocated to a social worker.

Permanence secured for 26 children through adoption since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

## Number of children looked after

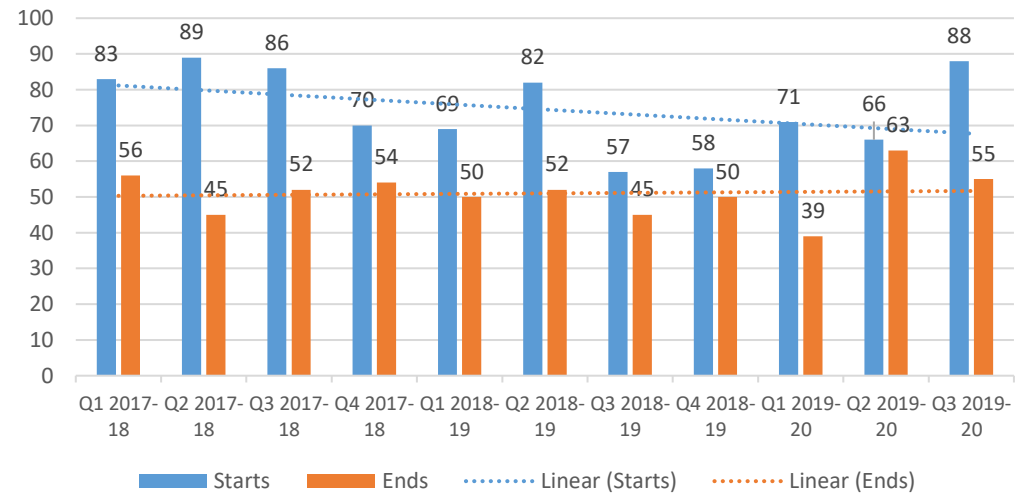


## Care Proceedings issued and concluded during year

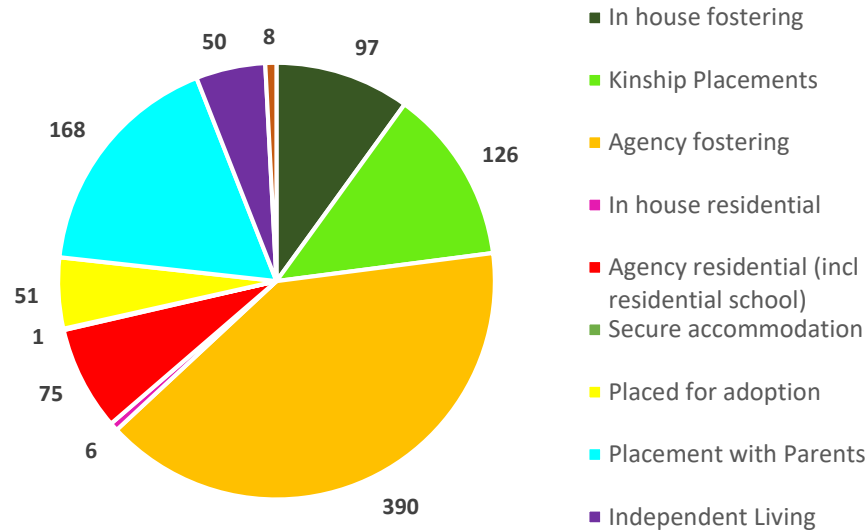


Q3 data is provisional

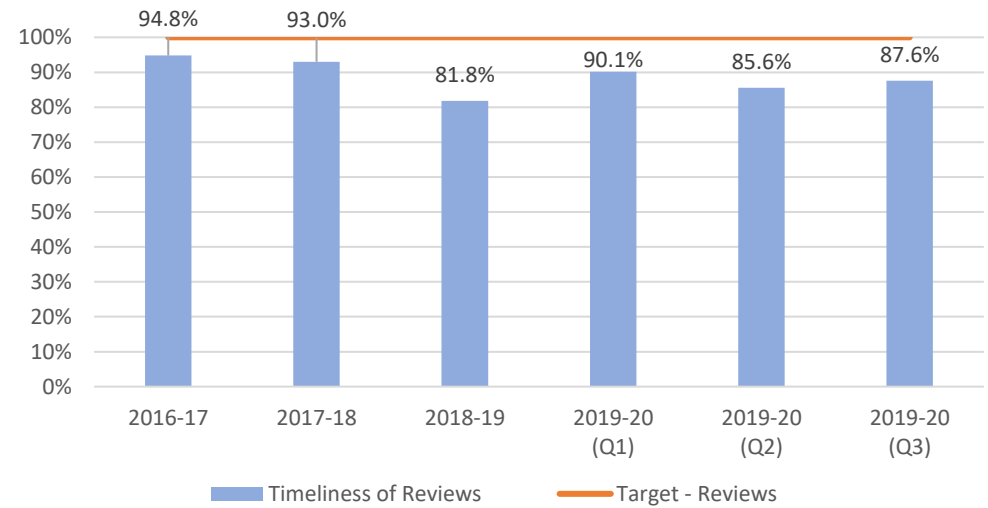
## Starts and ends of being looked after



### Breakdown of placements by type – as at 31.12.19

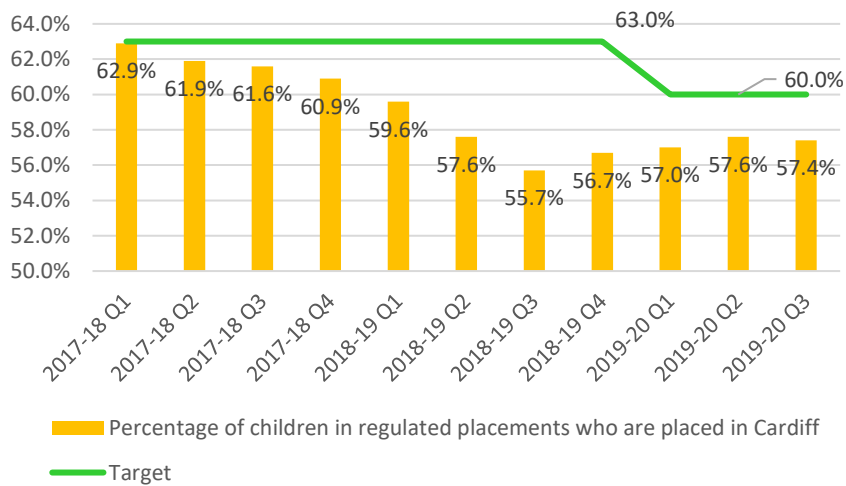


### Timeliness of Children Looked After Reviews



N.B. 2019/20 data is provisional

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



### Breakdown of all children in regulated placements – as at 31.12.19

