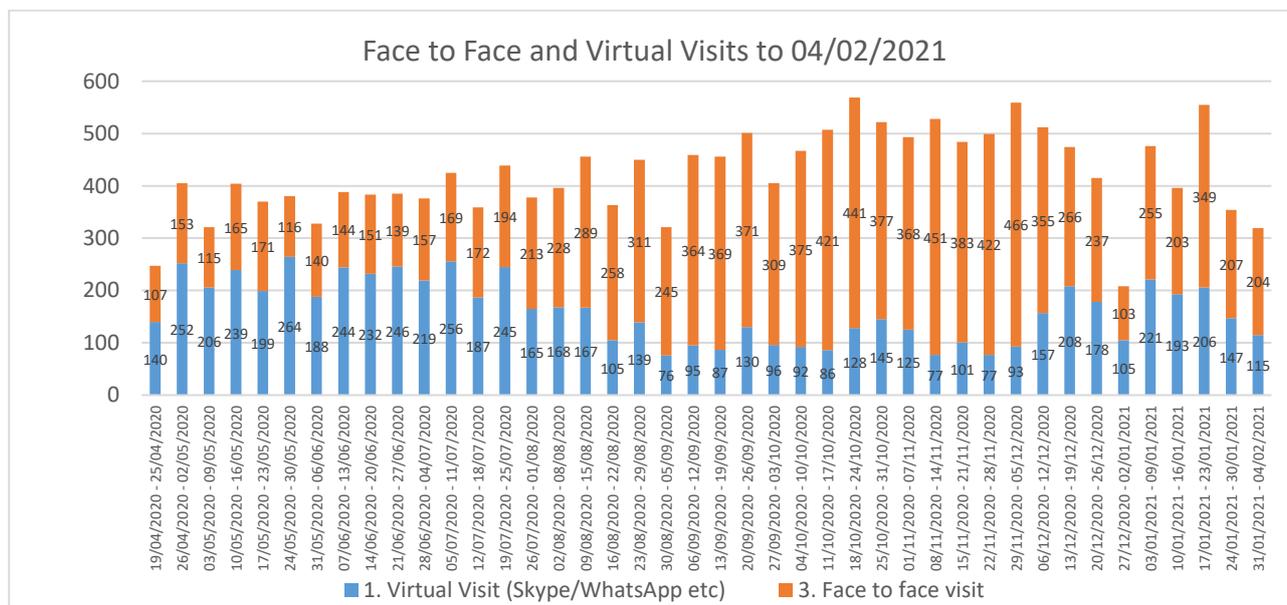


Update for Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee February 2021

Updates to Children's Services Operating Model and Structure

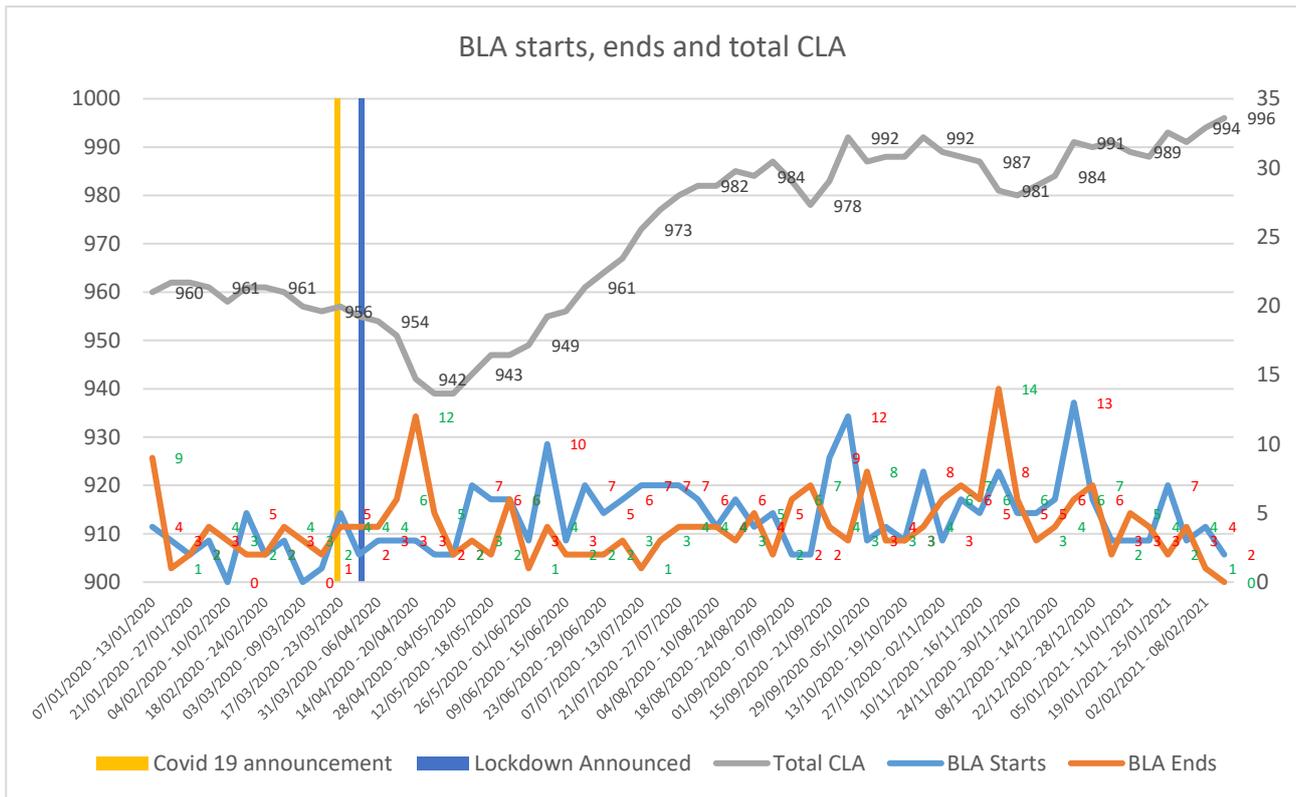
- Statutory visits to children on the Child Protection Register continue to receive face to face visits.
- Children who are looked after and placed with parents receive face to face visits if required on the basis of risk assessment.
- Other home visits are being undertaken remotely unless there are safeguarding risks or additional concerns.
- Arrangements are in place for staff from the PA Service and Fostering Service to keep in touch with children looked after with whom they have involvement to release capacity for social workers to support Child Protection cases.
- Contact risk assessments need to be completed prior to face to face visits.
- The graph below demonstrates the proportion of face to face and virtual visits over time.



- Commitment to recruiting to permanent social worker posts remains a priority.
- A clear exit strategy is in place for the departure of the Managed Team in March 2021. The gradual transfer of cases into the locality teams is being undertaken alongside the integration of specialist 11+ services into the localities.
- Recruitment to temporary posts has commenced to support locality teams to develop robust delivery of multi disciplinary services to develop a wraparound response to children and families in crisis.

Children Being Looked After

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 to 996 at 8th February 2021. The number of children looked after has been relatively stable since October, but is being closely monitored. 88 of the 220 children (40%) who started being looked after during the year to date were placed with parents on a Care Order, with family / friends or in parent and baby placements.



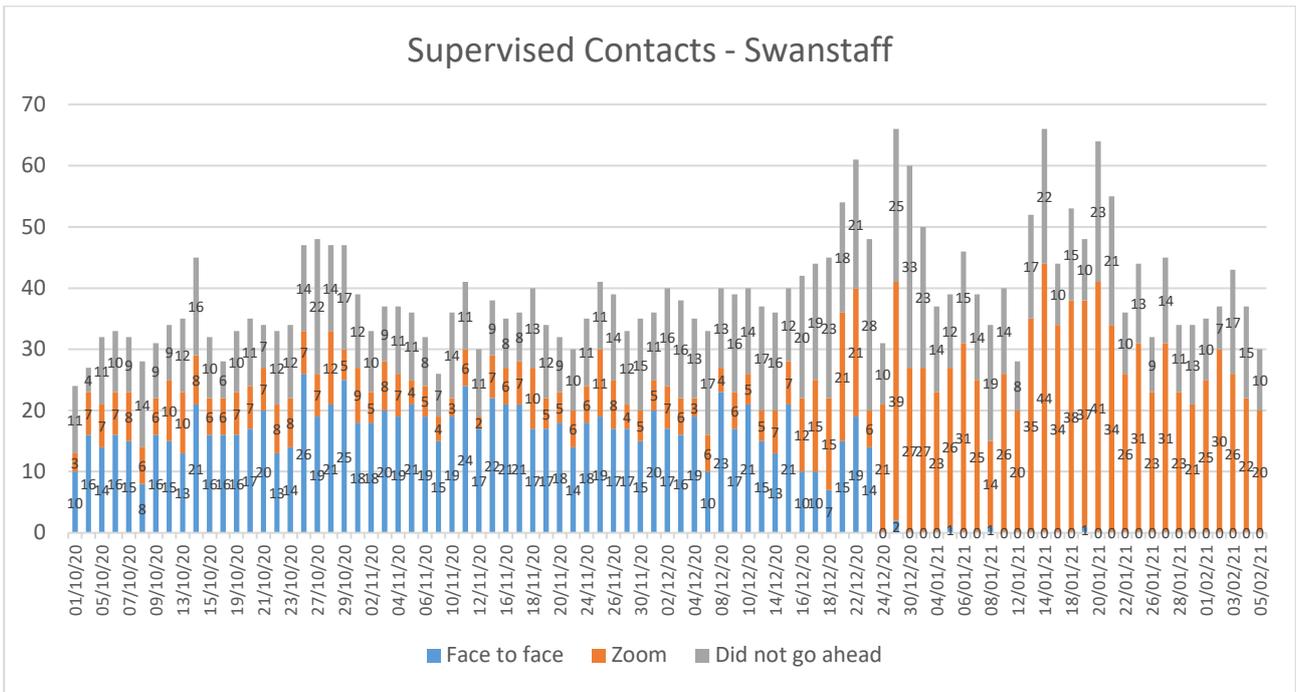
Contact

All contact is virtual unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. final contacts or where it is the risk of not going ahead with contact is deemed to be higher than going ahead). Face to face contact requires Operational Manager approval and agreement via the Children’s Management Team. In line with the guidance, all staff must ensure risk assessments and Contact Risk Assessments for children (that take account of their situation and people in their support network) are completed.

Supervised contact is primarily being delivered by a virtual model. With effect from w/c 1st February 2021 priority for face to face contact is being given to babies under the age of 1 on the basis of risk assessment for one hour per week.

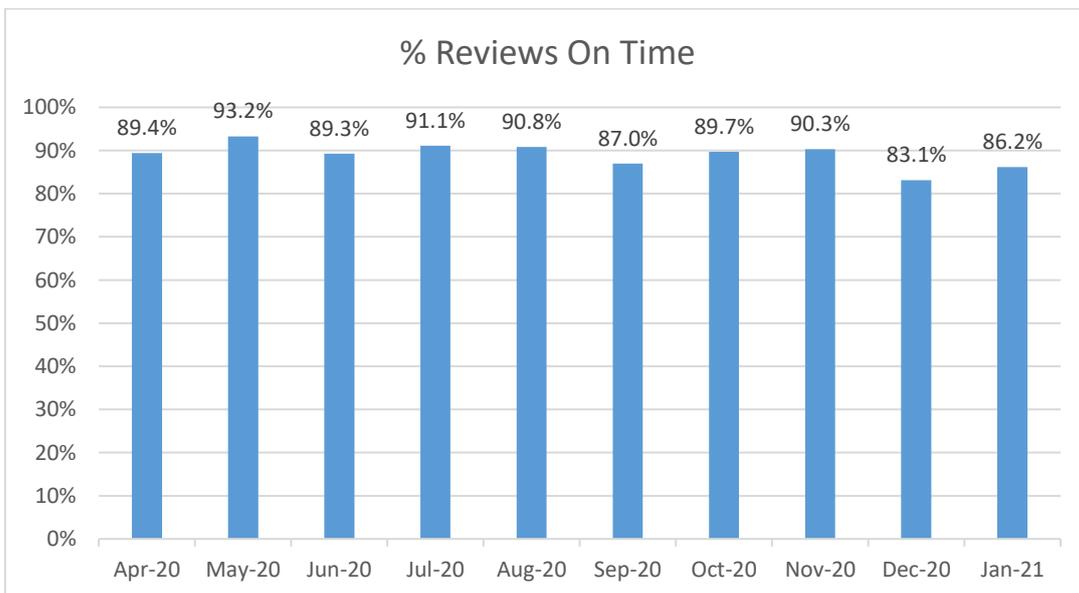
The reintroduction of face to face contact will be considered when it is clear that the risk of infection has reduced and the impact to services and those using services is seen as low. This is being reviewed weekly. In order to monitor the impact of contact moving from face to face to virtual, our provider is undertaking a survey to seek the views of carers and children, on the change to virtual contact. Alongside this a review of contact arrangements we will be undertaken with the social worker and families, to look at whether the frequency and length should be altered due to contact moving to virtual.

The graph below sets out the proportion of contacts undertaken on a face to face and virtual basis, and those that did not proceed.



CLA Reviews

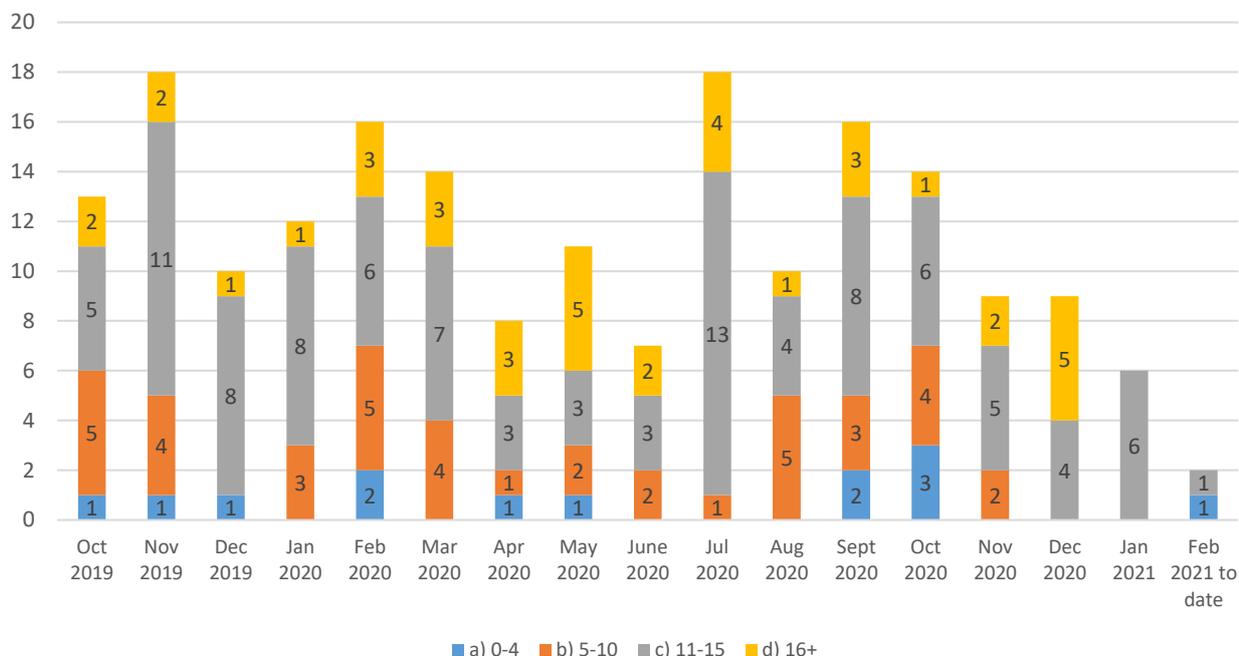
The process for children who are looked after continues as indicated in previous briefings. A hybrid model is being developed to build on the positive elements of virtual working identified during the COVID-19 crisis, however this will not be implemented until the level of infection in Cardiff reduces. Independent Reviewing Officers continue to actively speak to all parties, with children being spoken to separately before reviews to ascertain their views and wishes. Provisional figures on children looked after reviews show that the majority of reviews are taking place on time. The small dip in timeliness in December and January reflects capacity in the reviewing team (due to the increase in numbers of children on the Child Protection Register) and the impact of lockdown on availability and flexibility of staff and agencies; particularly staff with childcare responsibilities. To counter this, Independent Reviewing Officers have been doing more informal work to monitor plans, including reviewing of CareFirst, having virtual contact with children / young people and carers and having discussions with social workers.



Placements - Unplanned Placement Moves

After an increase in the number of unplanned placement move requests in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 announcement, the situation stabilised during Quarter 1. After an increase during Quarter 2 and the early part of Quarter 3, numbers have since fallen to 9 in December, 6 in January and 2 in February to date. The majority of unplanned placement move requests are for children aged 11-15.

Unplanned Placement Move Requests by Age



Providers

We are continuing to closely monitoring placements to ensure we are aware of those that are at risk of breaking down and we are working with the 4Cs to determine what support they might be able to provide to these placements. Decision making in relation to placements continues to be undertaken by the Children’s Management Team so all OMs have oversight of placement arrangements and arising issues.

An emergency residential provision for 11-18 years “Oakway” is being established – the registration application has been submitted to Care Inspectorate Wales. A further building has been purchased for an Assessment Centre, known as Falconwood, and work to prepare for opening is under way. The Manager and Deputy Manager are in post and recruitment to other posts is ongoing. The purpose of the provision will be to support a 10 week assessment to identify a young person’s needs to enable the right placement to be made going forward. This will include rehabilitation home as appropriate or move on to a fostering or residential placement. We are working with partnerships to develop and agree the multi agency approach to this assessment.

A mechanism is also in place to monitor future demand for Gateway provision / plans for young people aged 15.5+. We currently have 9 young people in agency fostering and residential placements who are waiting for a Gateway placement or tenancy, costing in excess of £16.4k per week. We continue to work with Housing to increase accommodation options for the young people via the Young People’s Housing Gateway and a deep dive exercise to better understand the needs of these young people to inform the development of provision is currently being undertaken.

Work is being undertaken to develop reporting and monitoring process to support CMT to monitor and track placements and demonstrate a shift in the balance of care.

The pie charts below show the growth in proportion of children placed with parents on a Care Order or in kinship arrangements with family members in recent years:

