

Children's Services Performance Report

Quarter 2 2023/24

Our Vision

Children in Cardiff are provided with the right support, from the right person at the right time, in the right place and at the lowest safe level of intervention, enabling them to remain with their family where it is safe for them to do so and achieve their full potential.

#KeepingFamiliesTogether

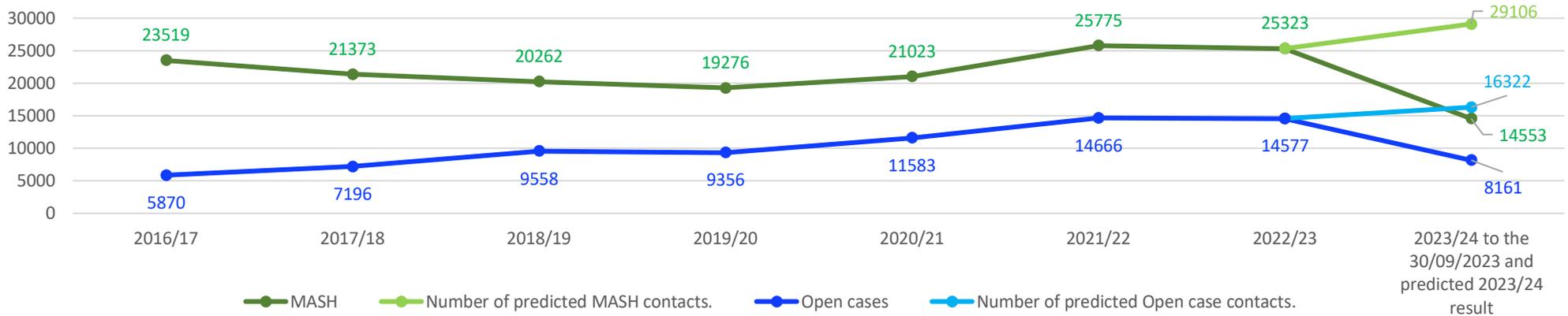


#GweithioDrosGaerdydd
#GweithioDrosochChi

#WorkingForCardiff
#WorkingForYou

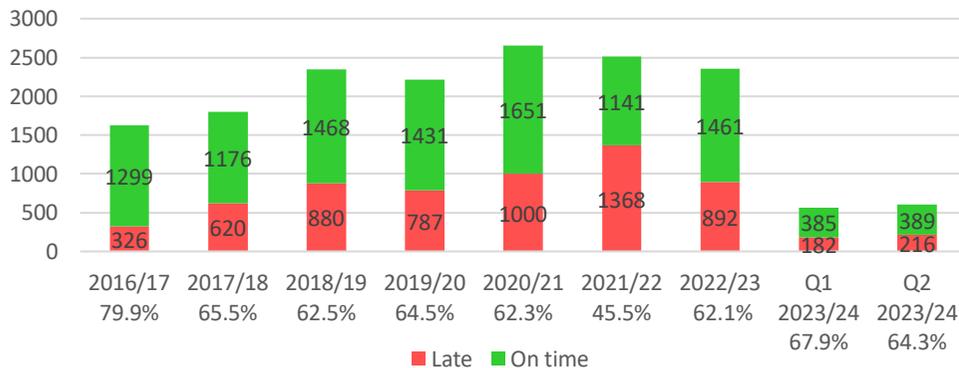
Demand

Contact / Referrals to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and on Open Cases



The graph above shows the increase in contacts / referrals to Children’s Services since 2019/20, peaking during 2021/22. Although lower than 2021/22, the number of contacts and referrals remained high and the pressures on the service continued during 2022/23. The change in trend since 2016/17 is due to the agreement that all safeguarding concerns on open cases need to be referred via the front door. During Quarter 2 2023/24 MASH received 7,365 contacts compared to 6,278 during Quarter 2 last year. Similarly, contacts on open cases have increased to 4,193 during Quarter 2 compared to 3,306 during Quarter 2 last year. Based on these figures the predicted contacts for the year are shown in the graph above and are projected to exceed last year’s volume and that of 2021/22.

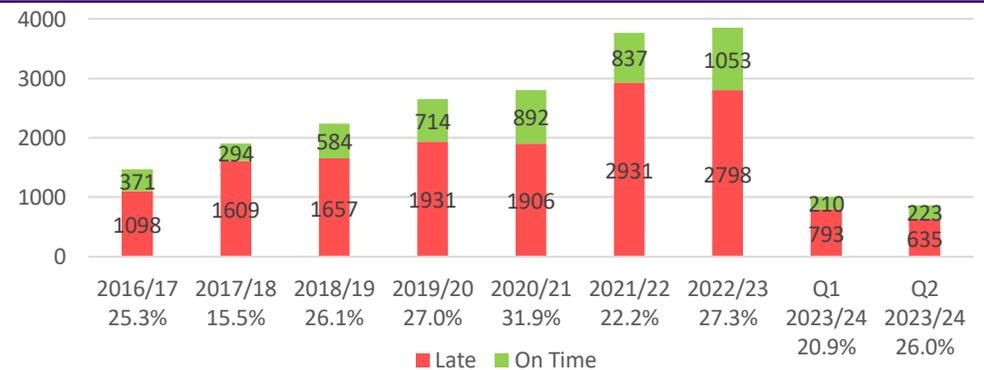
Well-being Assessments



64.3% (389 / 605) of well-being assessments were completed within 42 working days during Quarter 2 2023/24 compared to 67.9% (385 / 567) during Quarter 1.

Well-being assessments were an average 22 working days overdue compared to 43 working days in Quarter 1 2023/24.

Section 47 Assessments



26.0% (223 / 858) of Section 47s were completed within 10 working days during Quarter 2 2023/24 compared with 28.4% (210 / 1,003) in Quarter 1.

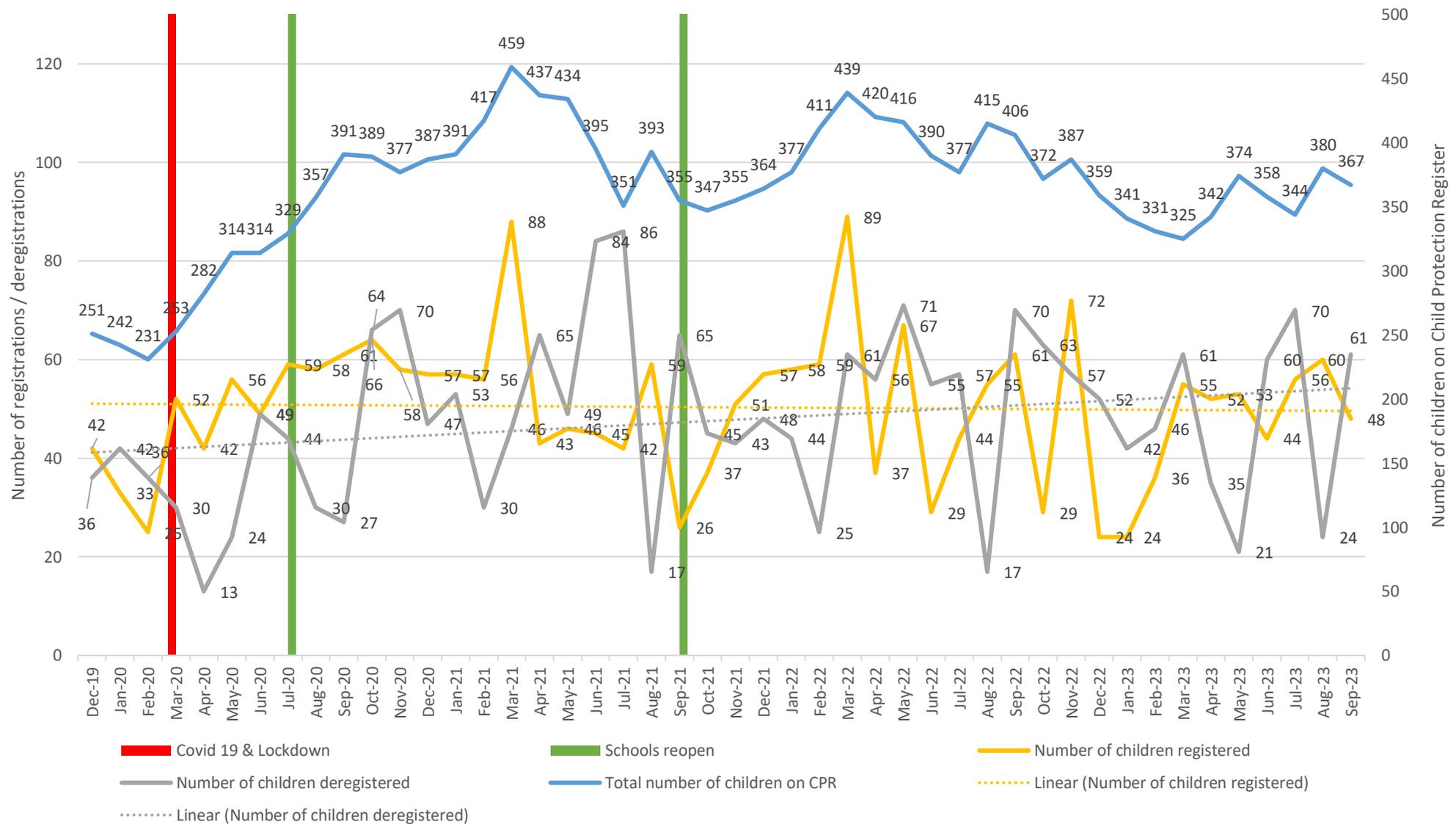
Section 47 assessments were an average 18 working days overdue compared to 20 working days in Quarter 1 2023/24.

Performance in relation to the **timeliness of well-being assessments** has declined slightly during Quarter 2 2023/24 compared with Quarter 1 2023/24 however it is an improvement compared to Quarter 2 of 2022/23 when 62.7% (323 / 515) were completed on time. In relation to the **timeliness of Section 47 assessments** performance has improved during Quarter 2 2023/24 compared to Quarter 1 2022/23, although it has declined compared to Quarter 2 2022/23 when 30.7% (270 / 881) were completed on time. The following actions continue to be taken so this improvement can be sustained and enhanced:

- Use of the management reporting system (Power BI) to provide high level and team specific detailed breakdown of performance information.
- Regular solution focused team discussions to consider performance, demand, capacity and pressure points.
- The Operational Manager (OM) continues to meet with Team Managers on a weekly basis to review the previous week's performance with a focus on identifying presenting difficulties and problem solving.
- The discussions include ambitious but achievable target setting for each team to address overdue assessments as well as strategies to prevent current work falling outside timescales - by reviewing progress in respect of the work that is approaching the completion deadline, determining whether the allocated worker has capacity to complete the work and, if not, determining what the barriers and support requirements are and targeting resource to assist, working across teams where necessary.
- This detailed discussion enables the OM to have scrutiny of those Section 47 enquiries which are overdue or approaching the deadline for completion. For those deemed to be exceptional in nature, thus requiring OM approval for an extension, the information can be captured and logged. For those that are not deemed to be exceptional, action plans can be developed to expedite completion.
- As some teams perform consistently well, the weekly meetings enable best practice benchmarking, with managers sharing ideas and learning across the whole Intake and Assessment service. The meetings also enable the OM to collate thematic information about positive improvements and common difficulties which can then be escalated to inform strategic planning.
- Creative use of resource (for example remote workers, resource assistants, social work assistants) to create capacity for social work staff to focus upon those tasks that only they can do.

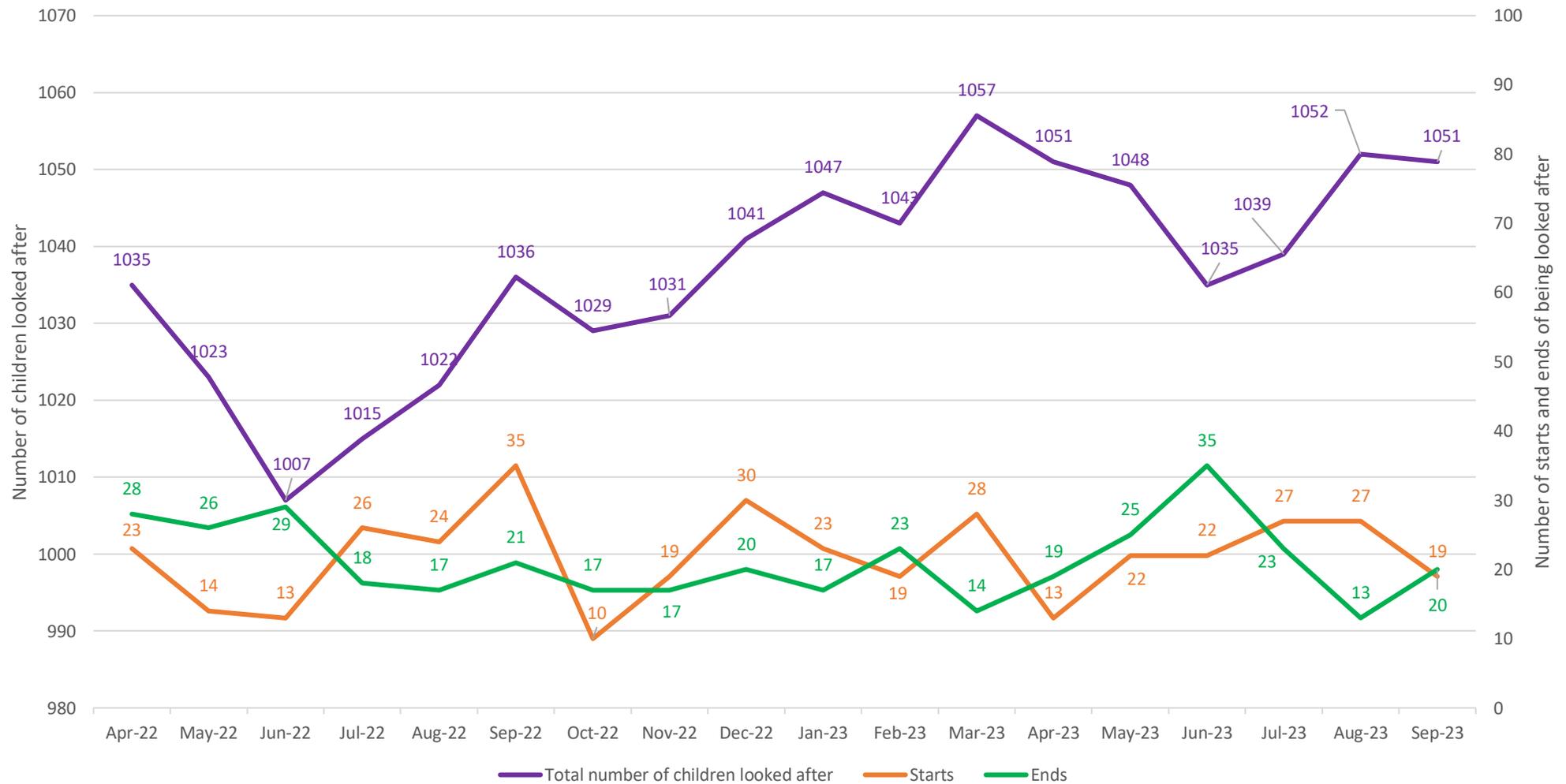
Performance relating to timeliness of assessments is in part related to a process delay in ensuring that assessments are written up - visits are undertaken and child protection investigations are not delayed. Processes are in place to address this, but it must be accepted that this is a demand led service - demand fluctuation will have an impact on performance. We are maximising use of available tools to continue to evaluate and monitor performance.

Number of Children on the Child Protection Register (CPR), Registrations and De-registrations



Following the steady increase in **children on the Child Protection Register (CPR)** from 231 in February 2020 to 459 in March 2021, the number decreased over the first half of 2021/22 to 347 children before increasing back to 439 children by the end of the year. Since then, the number of children on the CPR had fallen to 325 as at 31st March 2023, the lowest it had been since June 2020. During Quarter 1 and 2 2023/24 numbers of children on the register have increased once again and there are 367 children on the Child Protection Register as at 30th September 2023. The overall trend displayed in the graph above shows a gradually decreasing number of registrations compared with an increasing number of de-registrations.

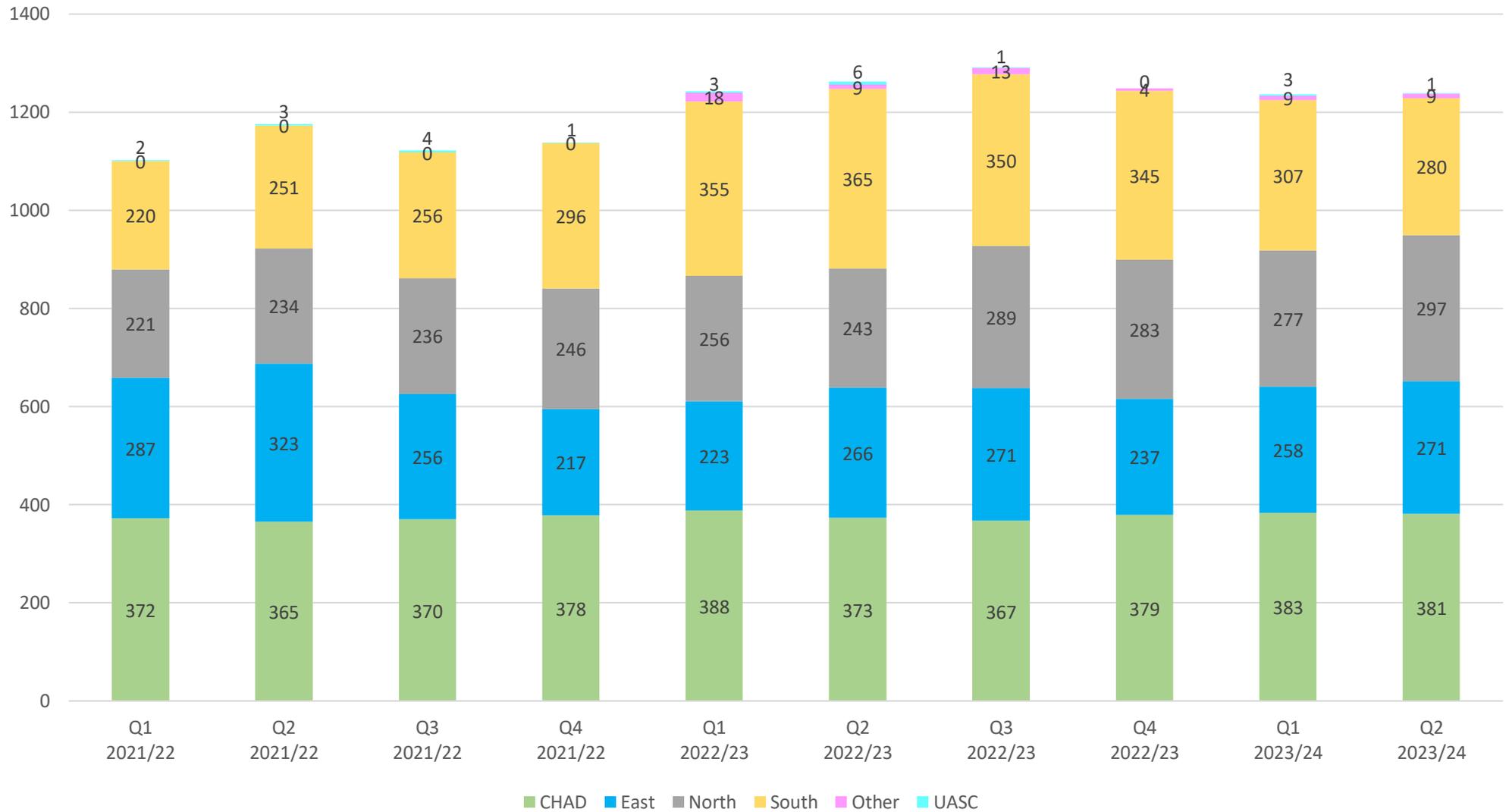
Looked After Starts, Ends and Total Number of Children Looked After (CLA)



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 increasing to 1,040 at 31st March 2022. Since then, as shown on the graph above, during Quarter 1 2022/23 the number of looked after reduced to 1,007 as at 30th June 2022, before increasing steadily through the rest of the year to reach 1,057 as at 31st March 2023. This decreased during Quarter 1 of 2023/24 to 1,035 as at 30th June 2023 but has since increased again to 1,051 as at 30th September 2023.

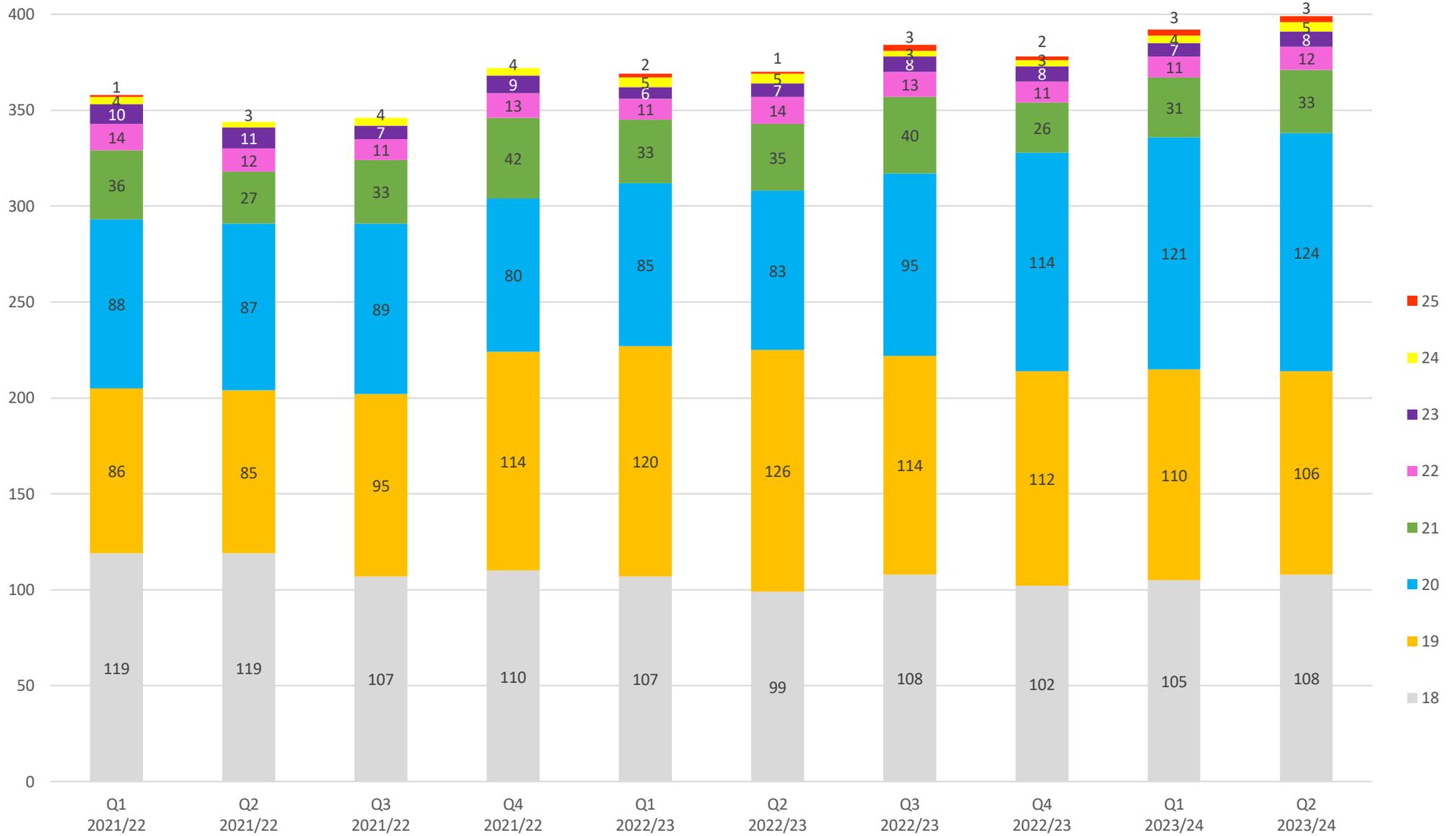
39 of the 1,051 were unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Care and Support (CASP)



Graph showing number of children and young people receiving Care and Support over time, with bars showing numbers of children with the Child Health and Disability Team and numbers of children in Locality teams. "Other" includes the following teams: Care and Support Planning team, Pre-birth team and the project team for Discharge and Reunification. This graph excludes care leavers open to Personal Adviser team, who are shown in the next graph. The overall number of children with a care and support plan is relatively stable.

Care Leavers

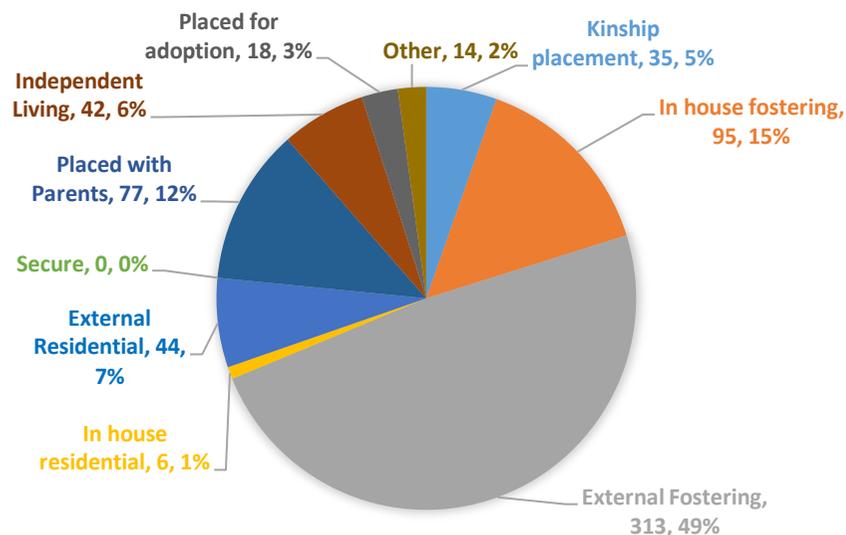


Graph showing number of care leavers over time by age, open to the Personal Adviser team. The number of care leavers is gradually increasing over time. The biggest overall growth is in the group that are currently age 20.

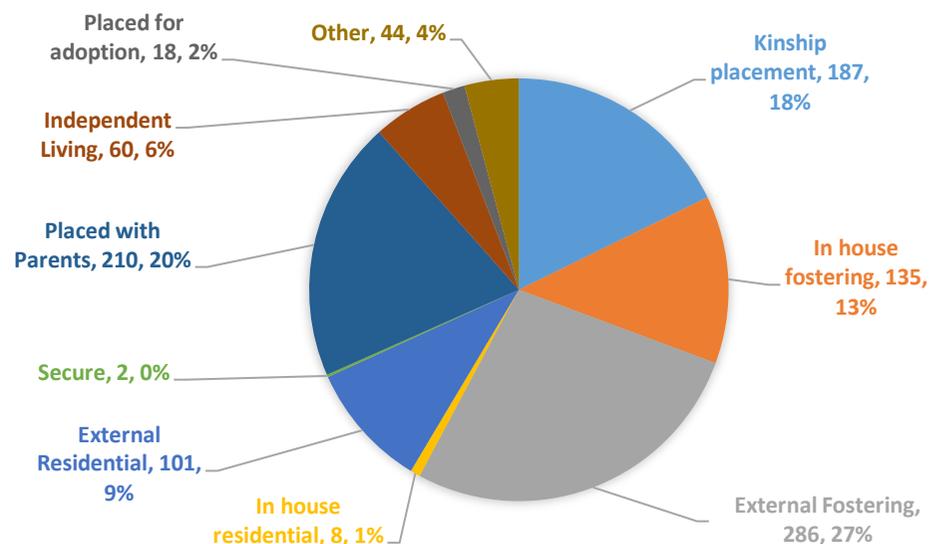
Shifting the Balance – Place

Ensuring a range of support in the community and a variety of homes for children are available in Cardiff

Total CLA by Placement Type – as at 31st March 2016 (644)



Total CLA by Placement Type – as at 30th September 2023 (1,051)



The growth in proportion of children placed with parents on a Care Order or in kinship arrangements with family members is evident – from 17% (112) in March 2016 to 38% (397) in September 2023. This increase accounts for 70% of the increase in the number of children looked after (285 / 407) and is due to a change of practice in the Courts.

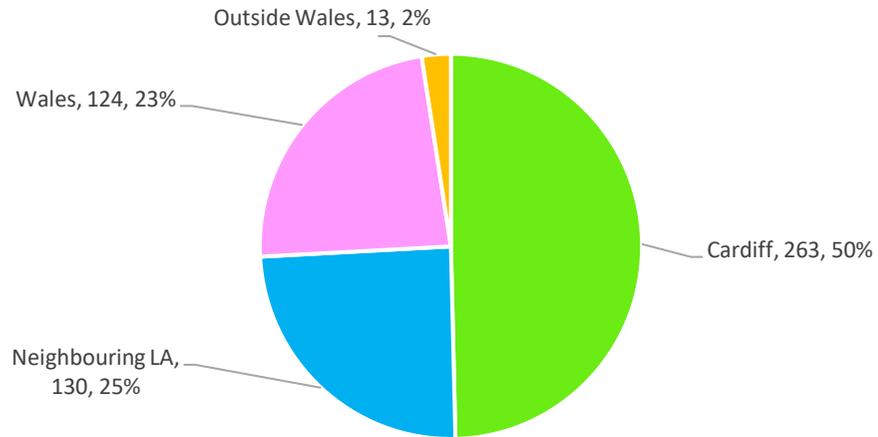
21 (28.8%) of the 73 children who started being looked after during Quarter 2 2023/24 were placed with parents on a Care Order, with family / friends or in parent and baby placements.

As at the end of Quarter 2 2023/24, 53.3%, (286 / 537) children and young people are fostered by external foster carers as a percentage of our regulated placements (excluding kinship); our target is 60%.

As at the end of Quarter 2, 2023/24, 18.8%, (101 / 537) children and young people are living in external residential placements as a percentage of our regulated placements (excluding kinship), our target is 17%. This is moving in the right direction to meet the target of 17% by the end of the year. We have 4 properties in the final stages of registration, which should help us achieve this target.

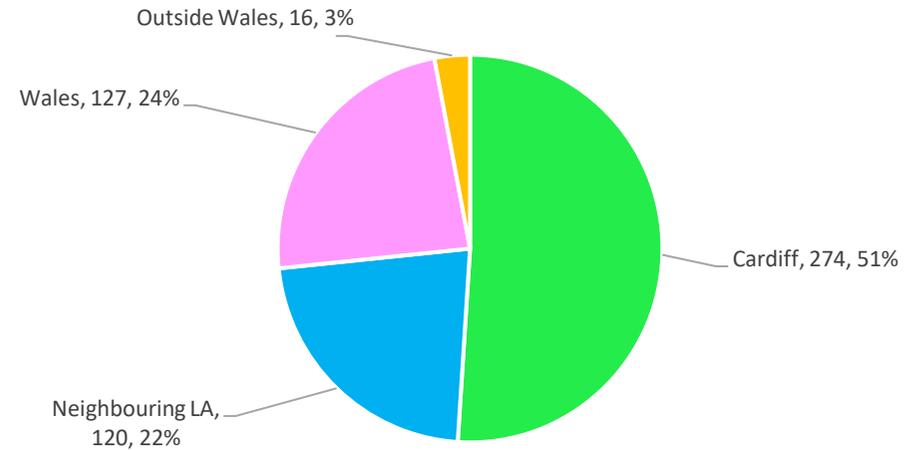
We are making good progress with the implementation of our Accommodation Strategy to develop in-house residential provision in Cardiff. The registration process is in the final stages for 4 properties. 5 homes are in the process of being purchased with plans for further homes to be purchased in accordance with our Accommodation Strategy.

Placement Location as at 30th June 2022



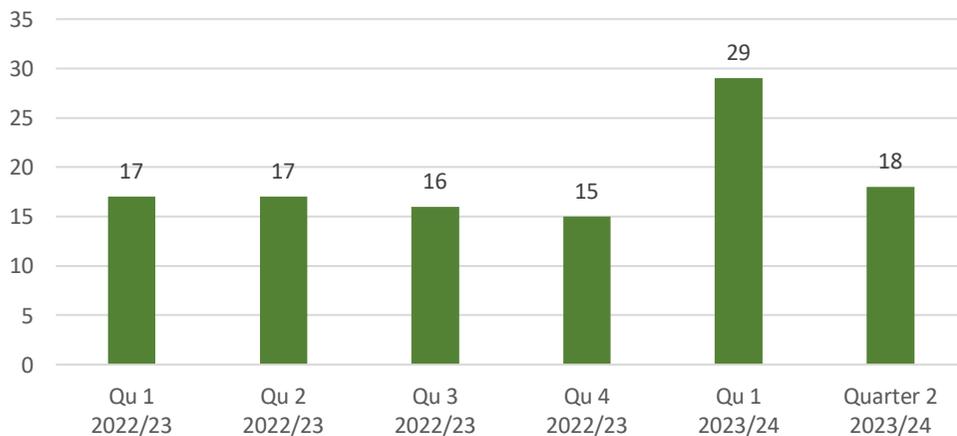
Pie chart showing percentage of children looked after in regulated placements excluding kinship placements, who are placed in Cardiff, neighbouring authorities, Wales and outside Wales as at 30th June 2022.

Placement Location as at 30th September 2023



Pie chart showing percentage of children looked after in regulated placements excluding kinship placements, who are placed in Cardiff, neighbouring authorities, Wales and outside Wales as at 30th September 2023. 73% of children were placed in Cardiff or a neighbouring local authority against a target of 80%. Pressures in the market are impacting on our ability to meet our target.

Number of Children Returned Home from Care



18 children returned home from care during Quarter 2 2023/24 compared to 29 in Quarter 1 2023/24, but consistent with 17 in Quarter 2 of 2022/23.

Please note the number of children returned home from care includes all children placed under Section 76, of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, or Section 31 of the Children Act 1989, who return home. This could mean they return to parents or a Special Guardianship Order is granted. This is in accordance with the statutory PI definition.

Accommodation Strategy / Fostering Update

Placement sufficiency continues to be a significant issue as the market is not currently able to meet the increase in demand for placements and the complexity of needs for young people. To address this, and in line with Welsh Government's commitment to remove profit from the care of children looked after, the Accommodation Project is ongoing and the following progress has been made:

- 4 properties (3 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed) in the registration process have been visited by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Confirmation of registration is anticipated imminently as initial feedback from CIW was positive.
- Arrangements are being made for work to commence on 2 new 3 bed properties - work on the properties will run in parallel.
- Purchase of a 4 bed property completed during the quarter – detail schedule of works to be developed.
- Search for properties on the open market continues (including for overnight short breaks) and the following purchases are progressing:
 - 5 bedroom property on a new housing estate.
 - Property to provide emergency overnight accommodation for use by the Interventions Hub. (Purchase of staff building completed during the quarter.)
- Recruitment to residential staff posts progressing well with young people's panels integrated into the recruitment process.

Regular meetings to monitor and track progress in relation to short breaks continue. Key progress during the quarter includes:

- Occupancy levels continue to increase with Ty Storrie providing overnight stays for 4 children on 15 nights in August (up from 4 children on 6 nights in June).
- Staff have been recruited to vacancies and the new 12-hour shift pattern is in place.

Implementation of a localised model – “The Right Place in Cardiff” is progressing and key developments during the quarter include:

- Further analysis of data undertaken and as a result consideration is being given to changing the target age range to 10-14 (from 12-16).
- Assessment model is being developed – working towards a 6 week assessment period.
- Work undertaken with staff at Falconwood (which will be the residential hub) and with Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC) staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of the new hub model.
- Awareness raising to be undertaken at staff engagement event in October in readiness for go live - planned for Quarter 3.

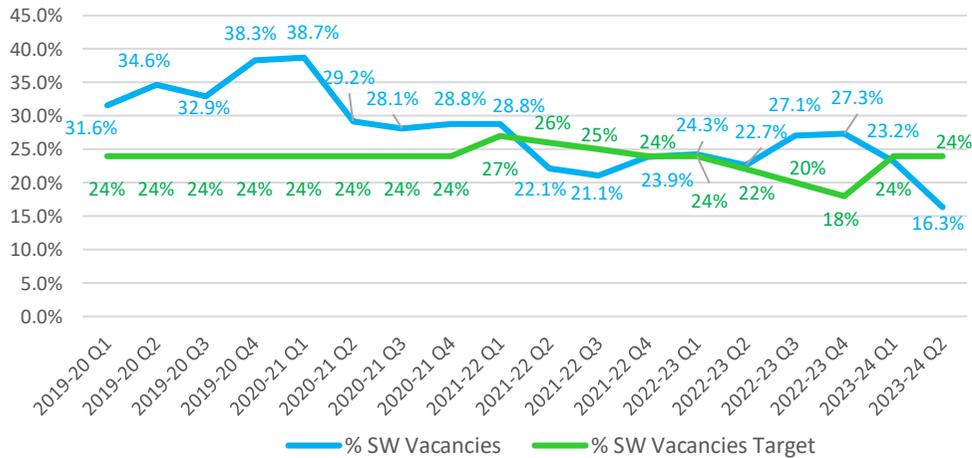
Work to develop the in-house fostering services is ongoing and the following progress has been achieved during the quarter:

- The number of children in in-house fostering placements was 135 at 30th September compared with 128 at 30th June. This has exceeded the target of 130.
- Development of the Teen Scheme continues with 3 young people in placements and 2 arrangements progressing (for an additional 4 young people).
- A recruitment and retention plan is being developed with a view to being signed off early in Quarter 3.
- The marketing plan is being implemented and attendance at key events in the city continues – including a fun day in Bute Park. The team are also attending team meetings across Children's Services and wider Council Directorates to raise awareness of Fostering for Cardiff. We had 11 full assessments of people who would like to become foster carers ongoing at 30th September consistent with 11 at 30th June 2023.
- Relationships with independent fostering agencies are improving and agencies have agreed to give Cardiff advance notice of any placements becoming available in the city in addition to new carers approved in the city.
- Foster Wales have set targets in line with a 20% uplift on enquiry figures from 2022/23. For Cardiff the target for enquiries is 178. Best practice indicates that 1 in 3 (33%) enquiries should progress to an initial home visit this therefore gives Cardiff an initial enquiry visit target of 60. The best practice conversion rate for enquiry to approval is 12% giving Cardiff an approval target of 22.
- At the end of Quarter 2 we had received a total of 90 enquiries and are on track to meet the annual target of 178. We have carried out 19 initial enquiry visits (IEV) which means the conversion rate from enquiry to IEV is currently sitting at 22% which is below best practice (33%). 5 carers have been approved to date this year which is below the midpoint target of 11 approvals.

Shifting the Balance – People

Supporting a permanent workforce

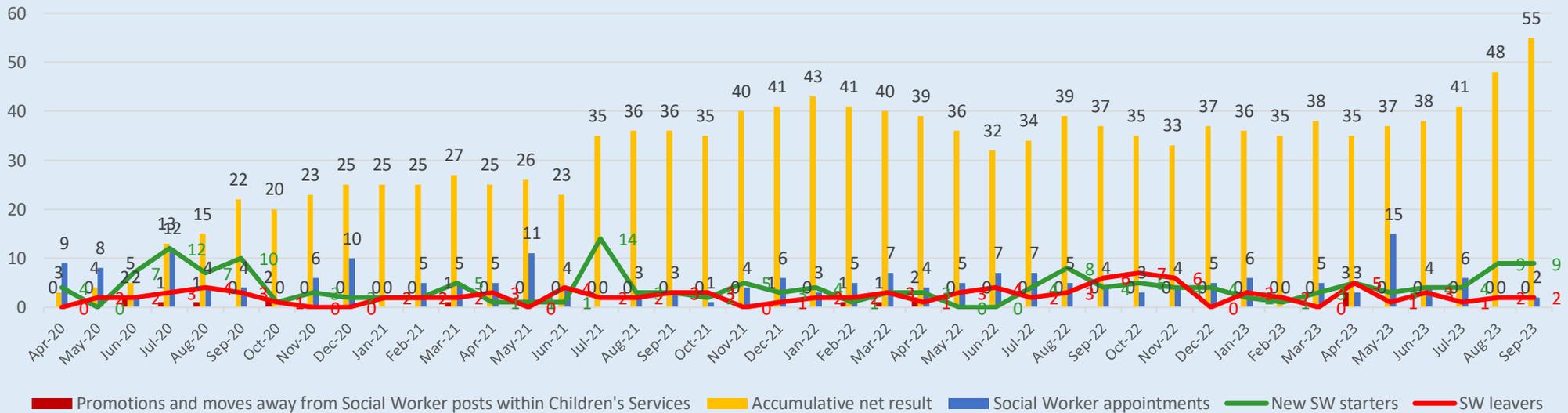
Percentage of Social Worker Vacancies in all Teams



16.3% **Social Worker vacancy rate** as at end of Quarter 2 2023/24. Target met. 34 out of 208 posts were vacant and 174 posts filled on a permanent basis.

- Vacancy rate has improved to 16.3% at the end of Quarter 2 from 23.2% in Quarter 1 and has exceeded the target level of 24%.
- In addition to this, 5 social workers have been appointed and are due to take up post in the coming weeks with an additional 7 students also due to start when they qualify later in the year. 3 students have joined us as Social Work Assistants while they are waiting on their qualifications.

Net Result of Social Workers Starting and Leaving



Sickness Update

FTE Target = 12.0	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Q4 2023/24	
Children's Services Sickness FTE days lost per person (cumulative during year)	2.52	5.68			<p>The target for 2023/24 is 12.0 FTE sickness days lost for Children's Services employees.</p> <p>The final outturn for 2022/23 was 12.93 FTE days lost per person which met the target of 14.5 and was a slight improvement on 2021/22 when the outturn was 13.0.</p> <p>During Quarter 2 the number of sickness FTE days lost increased to 5.68 per person, which has taken the forecast figure to 12.49 FTE sickness days lost per person which is over our target of 12.0 days, but would be an improvement on last year.</p> <p>Sickness is closely monitored by CMT to ensure that processes are followed. Options to support staff to return to work on a phased return are explored with input from all members of the management team.</p>
Children's Services Sickness FTE days lost per person full year forecast	10.84	12.49			

Source: Corporate HR Data

Workforce Strategy Update

Work to implement our recruitment and retention strategy to reduce social worker vacancies is ongoing. Key progress during the quarter includes:

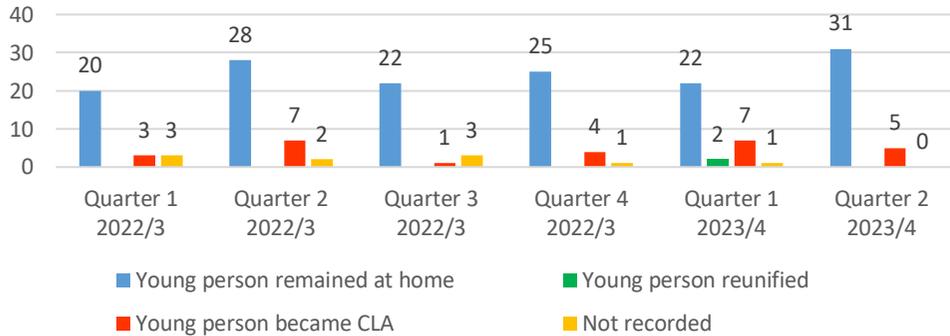
- Detailed Workforce Action Plan is being implemented and progress monitored as part of Directorate Delivery Planning process.
- Vacancy rate has improved from 23.2% in June to 16.3% in September, achieving target level. In addition to this we have 5 social workers appointed and due to take up post in the coming weeks with an additional 7 students also due to start during the year who will qualify later in the year. 3 students have joined us as Social Work Assistants while they are waiting on their qualifications.
- The development of an Officer Decision Report proposing new conditions for social workers will not be progressing at this time due to the improved vacancy position.
- Recruitment to residential posts is progressing well. Training needs for residential / edge of care staff have been identified and providers sourced – arrangements for training to commence are being made.
- A proposal for a Children's Services Academy has been developed and is currently out for consultation with managers in advance of being launched in Quarter 3.
- A Training Team Manager post has been created and is out to advert. When appointed, this post will progress work that has started on the development of role specific induction, competency frameworks and improving career progression.
- Practice Matters forums for practitioners and managers have taken place around good assessments and child sexual abuse practice.
- Work on development of new operating model is progressing. Vacant social worker posts have been converted to case holding social care practitioner roles and expert Grade 10 social worker posts have been created and are out to advert.
- Motivational Interviewing Training has been sourced and a pilot is due to start in October.
- Trauma Informed training has been mapped – an internal module is to be developed and launched by the training team in Quarter 3.
- Review of business support – staff's views from across the service were sought to feed into the process. Next steps include formal consultation with staff.

Shifting the Balance – Practice

Developing our practice and procedures

Interventions Hub

Outcomes following intervention at ARC



During Quarter 2, 31 young people who received an **intervention from the Adolescent Resource Centre** remained at home compared with 5 young people who started being looked after.

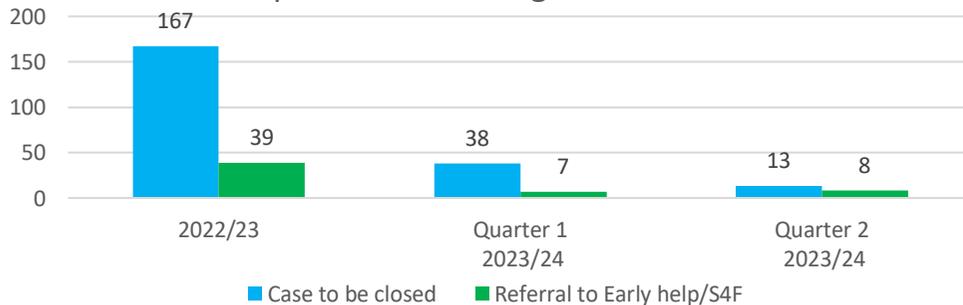
Outcomes following intervention from Think Safe!



During Quarter 2, 8 young people received a successful **intervention from the Think Safe! service** and 2 young people have ongoing needs that can be met; the family of 13 young people disengaged.

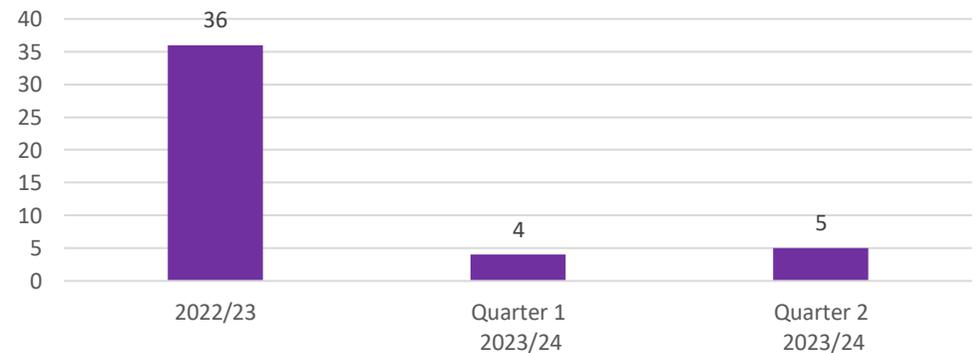
Reviewing Hub

Step downs following CASP Review



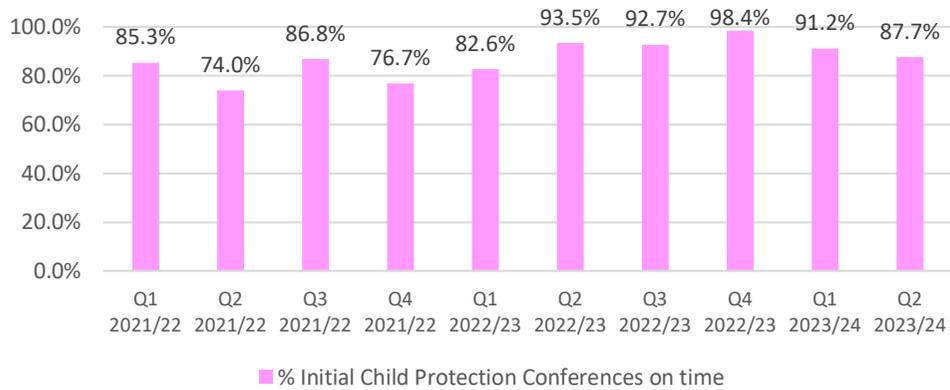
During Quarter 2 2023/24, 13 children have been identified for case closure and an additional 8 for step down to Early Help / Support4Families from 323 CASP reviews. We continue to focus the work of this team on priority areas rather than across the whole system due to resource pressures.

Safeguarding procedures to be considered



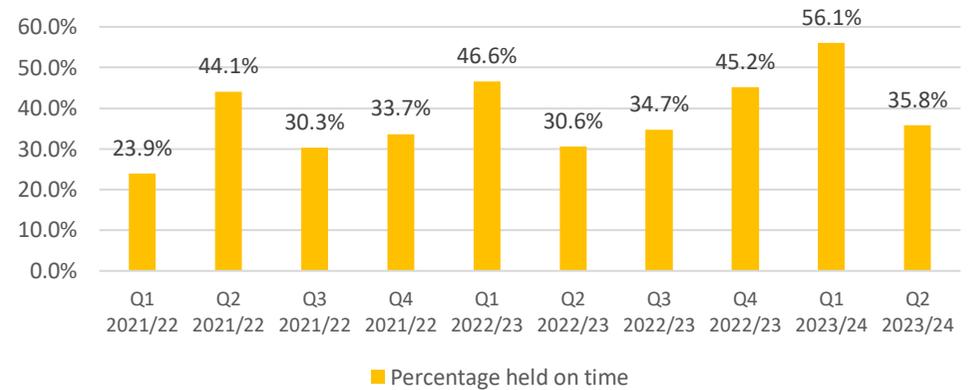
During Quarter 2, it was identified that safeguarding procedures should be considered for 5 of the 323 children reviewed – step ups – compared with 4 / 379 in Quarter 2 2022/23.

Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences On Time



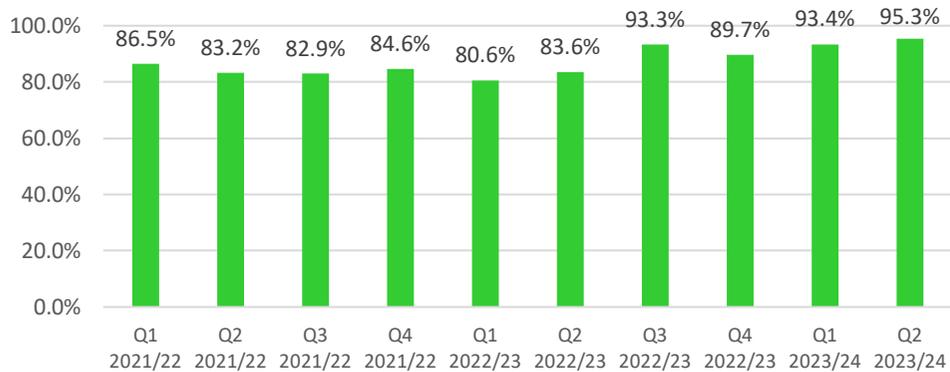
Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences held on time = 87.7% (157 / 179) during Quarter 2 2023/24 compared to 91.2% (145 / 159) during Quarter 1 2023/24. Although performance remains relatively high, this is rated as amber due to the reduction in timeliness over the last 2 quarters. All late conferences have since been held and were, on average, 5 working days late. The reasons for the late conferences (including scheduling errors and recording delays) are being reviewed to inform actions needed to improve timeliness going forward.

Percentage of Initial Core Group Meetings On Time



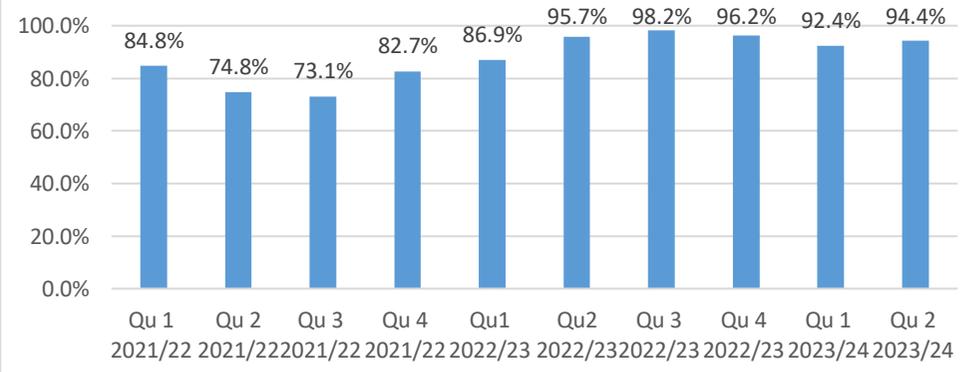
Percentage of Initial Core Group meetings held on time = 35.8% (59 / 165) during Quarter 2, compared to 56.1% (83 / 148) during Quarter 1 2023/24. This area of performance continues to be unacceptable, the presentation of performance data will be reviewed to establish if this can be improved to assist with the management of performance. There is currently a Business support review the outcome of which will assist with supporting social workers in improving their performance. Performance continues to be monitored weekly and Core groups is one of 5 key performance areas that are being targeted.

Percentage of Child Protection Review Conferences On Time



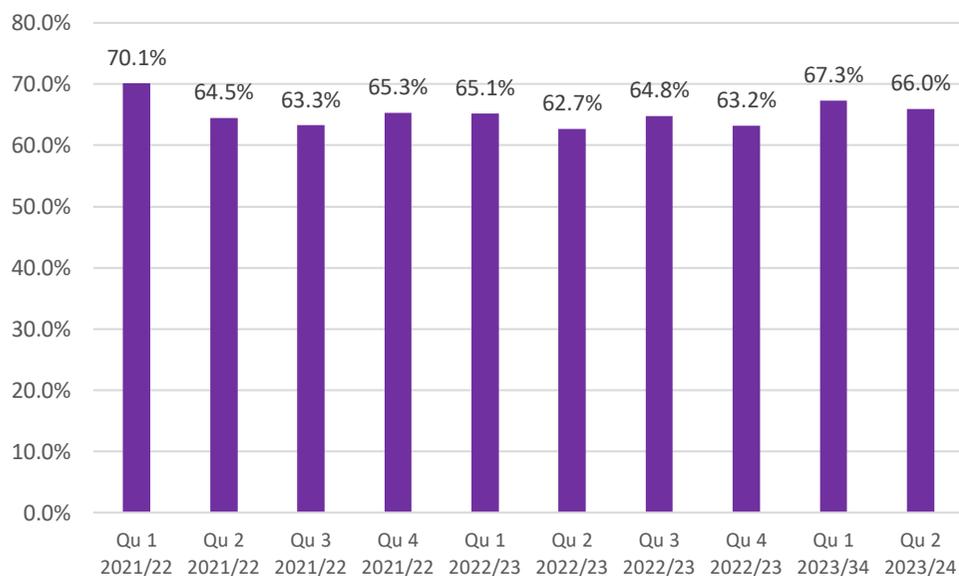
The percentage of Child Protection Review Conferences held on time is 95.3% (262 / 275) during Quarter 2 2023/24, compared to 93.4% (254 / 272) during Quarter 1 2023/24. Performance in Quarter 2 was at its highest level since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Percentage of Child Looked After Reviews On Time

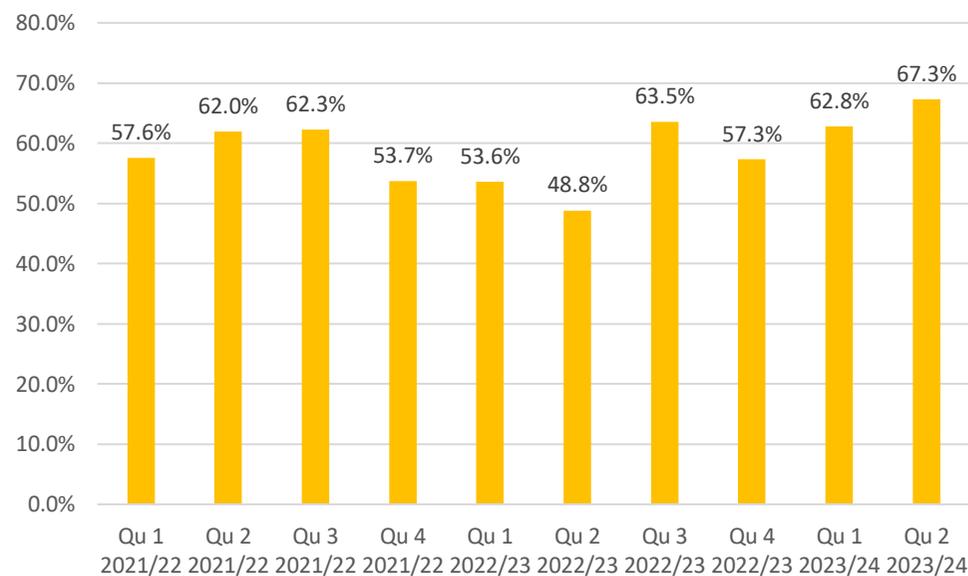


The percentage of looked after reviews held on time during Quarter 2 is at 94.4% (603 / 639) compared to 92.4% (629 / 681) in Quarter 1. A system is now in place to escalate issues with convening initial looked after reviews.

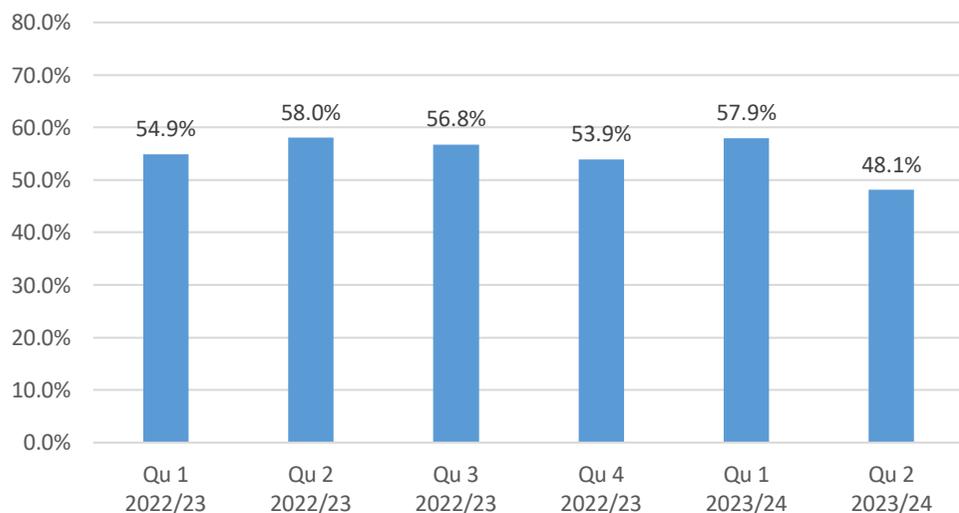
Percentage of Visits to Children on the CPR On Time



Percentage of Statutory Visits to CLA On Time



Percentage of Visits to CASP On Time



Commentary

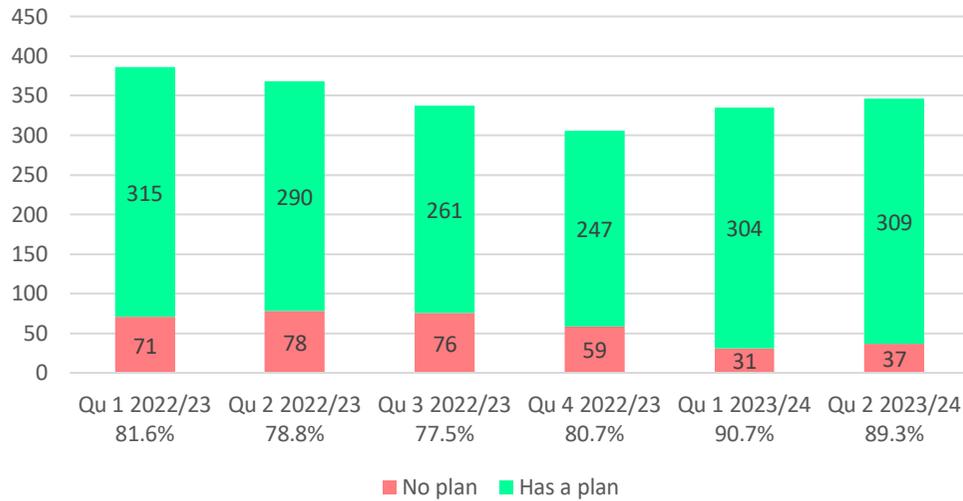
The percentage of visits to children placed on the CPR on time = 66.0% (1,466 / 2,222) during Quarter 2 2023/24 compare to 67.3% (1,840 / 2,733) during Quarter 1 2023/24.

The percentage of statutory visits to children looked after on time = 67.3% (641 / 953) during Quarter 2 2023/24 compared to 62.8% (670 / 1,067) during Quarter 1 2023/24.

The percentage of visits to children with a care and support plan on time = 48.1% (1,320 / 2,742) during Quarter 2 2023/24 compared to 57.9% (1,363 / 2,353) during Quarter 1 2023/24.

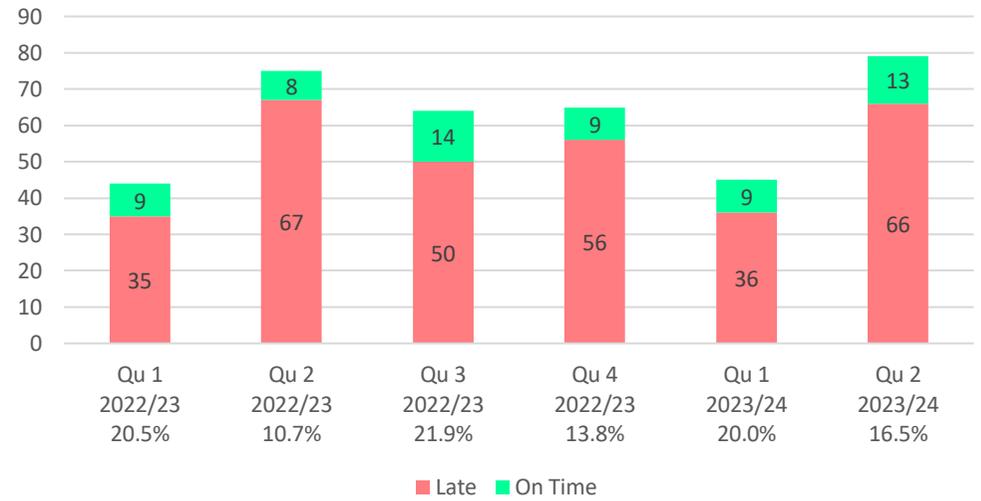
Performance information has been reviewed and adapted to provide OMs with more detailed data to support monitoring of the timeliness of visits being undertaken and recorded. This will allow focused support and understanding of the barriers to improving performance. A system is now in place for Social Work Resource Assistants support teams to improve the monitoring of timeliness using the weekly Power BI report. This has resulted in improved performance in relation to visits to children looked after – the learning from this will be applied to child protection and CASP visits.

Child Protection Plans in Place



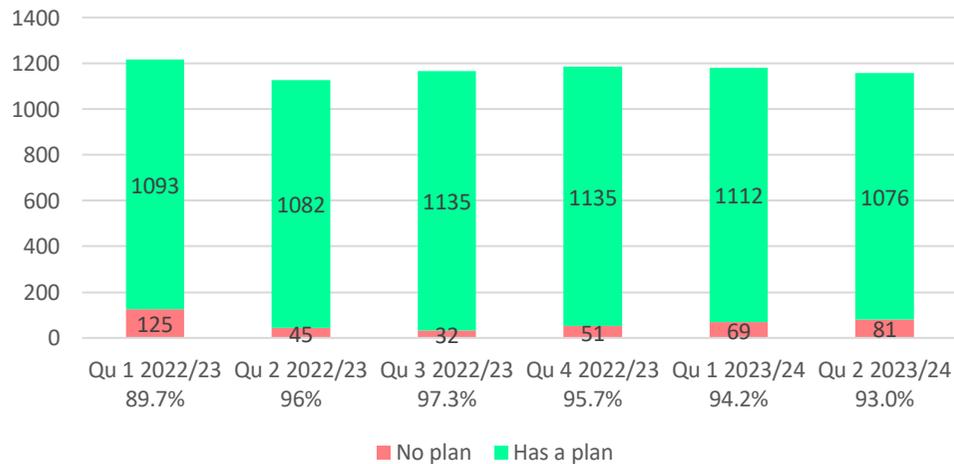
89.3% of children on the CPR had a plan in place (not including children where the plan is not yet required – within 10 days following registration).

Children looked after plans in place within 10 working days of start of being looked after



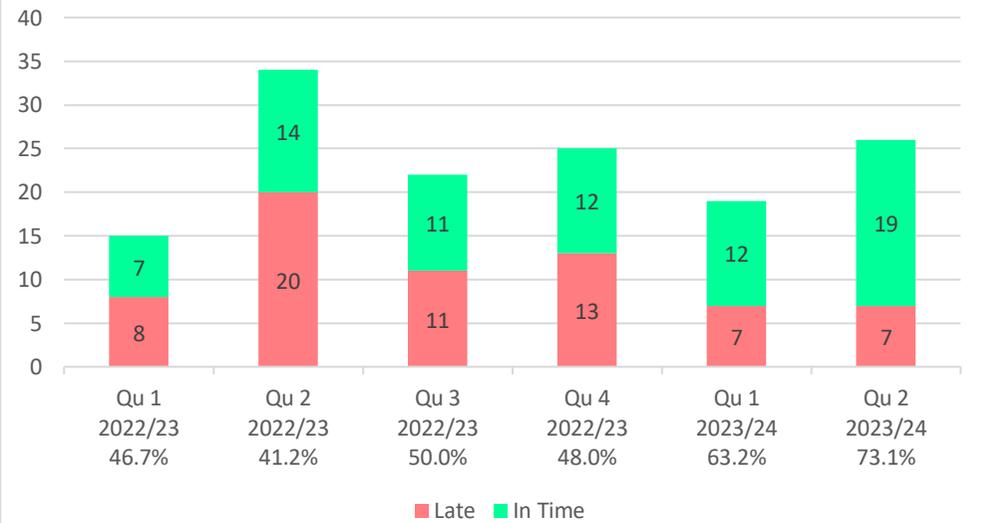
20% of children looked after had a plan in place within 10 working days of starting to be looked after.

Care and Support Plans in Place

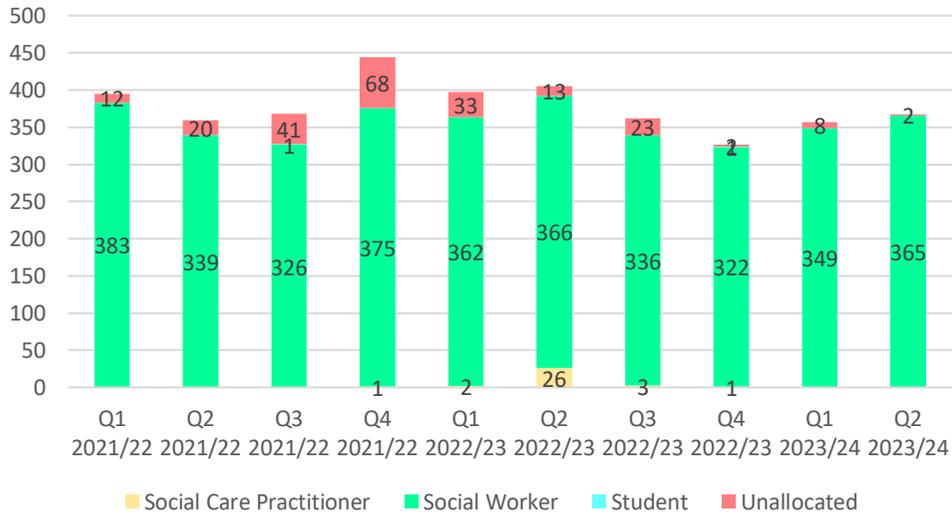


Figures do not include those de-registered in the last 14 days from the CPR or those with a well-being assessment in progress as a plan is not yet required.

Pathway Plans in Place Within 3 Months of Becoming Eligible

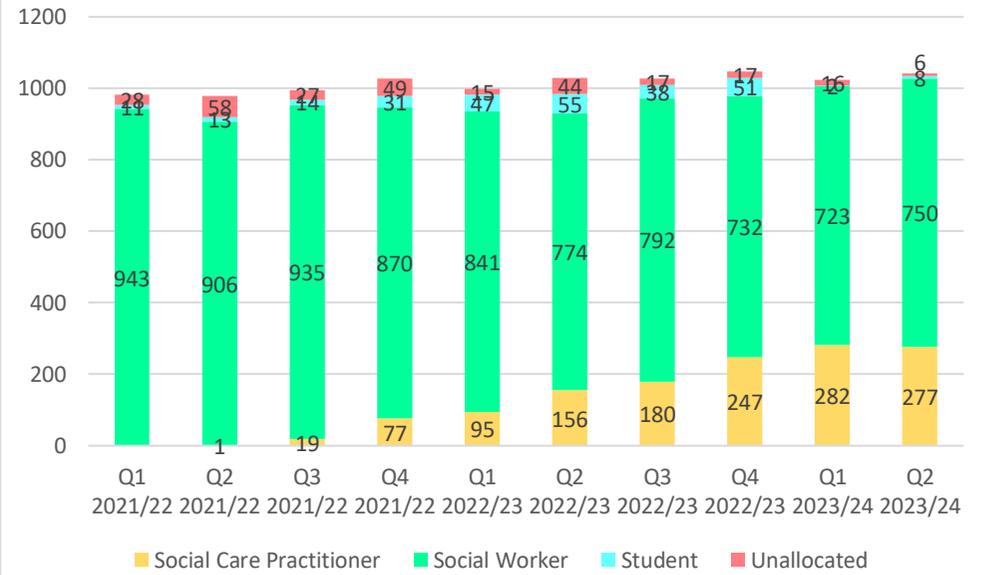


Child Protection Allocations

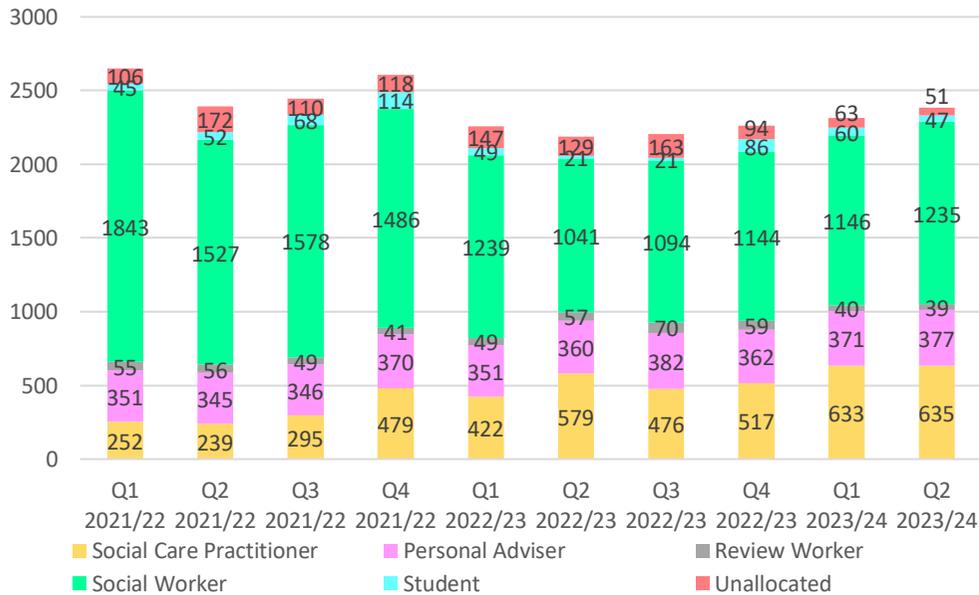


All unallocated cases have since been allocated.

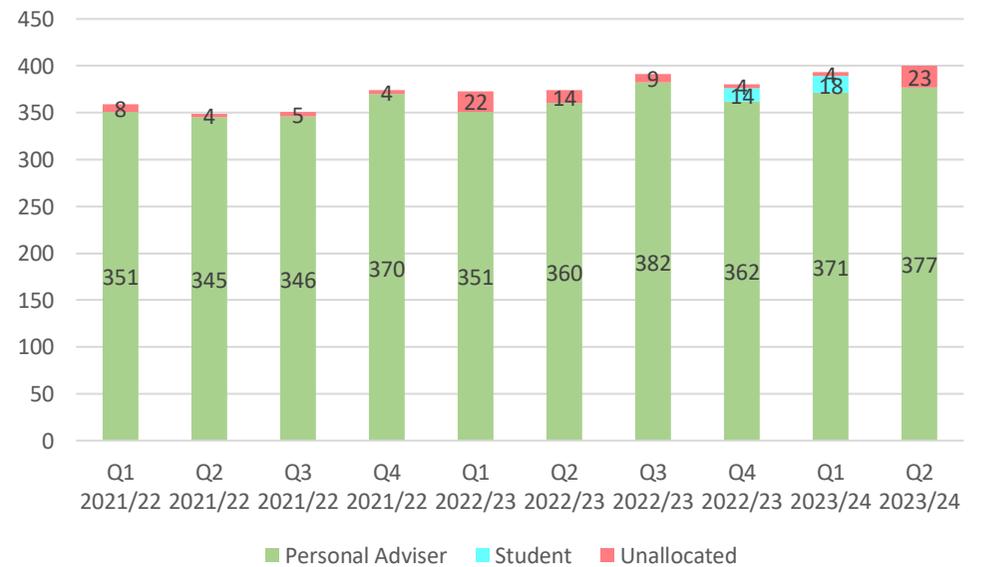
Child Looked After Allocations



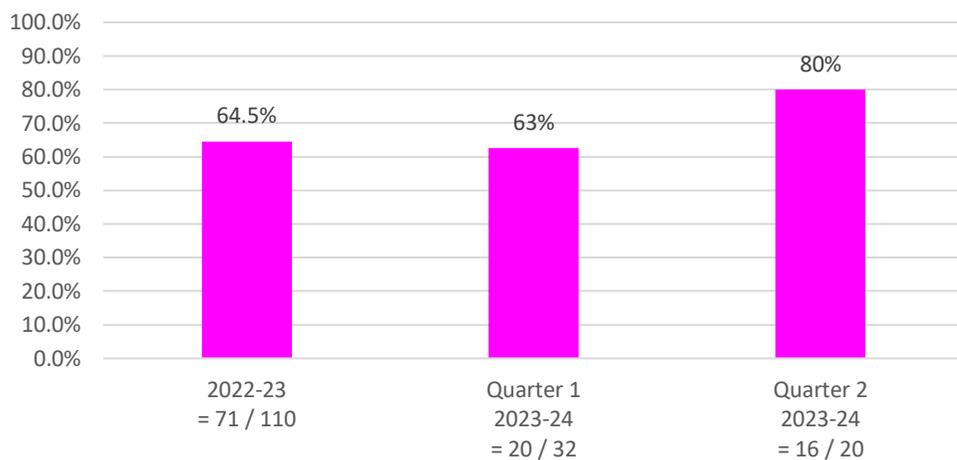
Care and Support Allocations



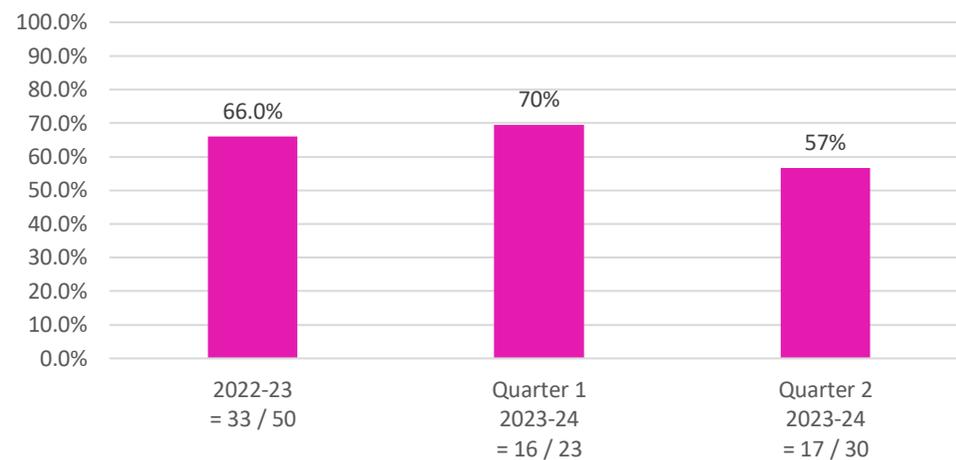
Personal Advisor Allocation



Percentage of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of education, employment or training in the 12 months since leaving care



Percentage of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of education, employment or training in the 13-24 months since leaving care



Operating / Practice Model / Quality Assurance Update

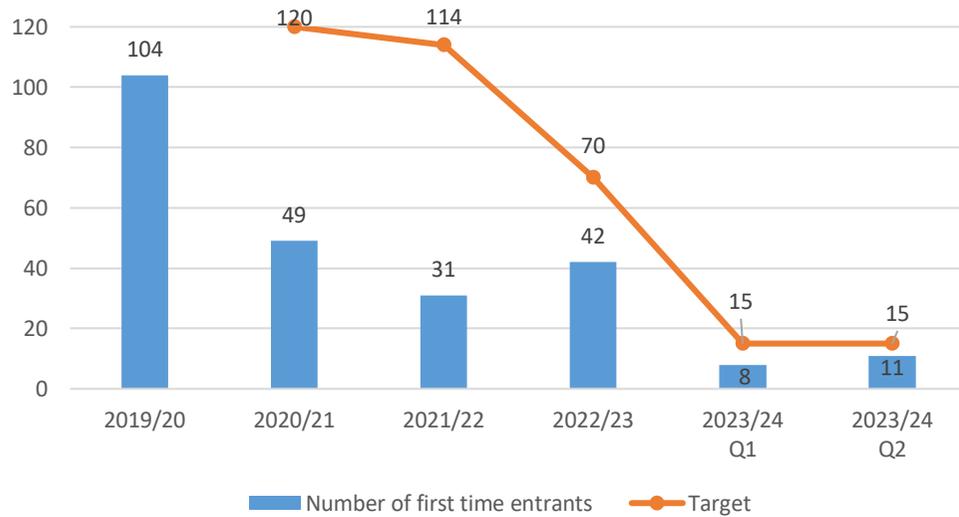
Work to develop a new operating model continues - taking account of demographic data. From a locality perspective - all Grade 7 social workers and Team Managers are permanent staff. The agency social workers that remain in localities are highly experienced social workers offering a wealth of experience. This increased consistency will enable us to continue to strengthen our locality connections. Motivational Interviewing Training has been sourced and a pilot started in October. Trauma Informed training has been mapped – an internal module is to be developed and launched by the training team in Quarter 3.

In relation to Quality Assurance, group auditing has continued during Quarter 2. There continues to be progress made in managers auditing skills and development of our understanding of “what good looks like”. A total of 44 cases were audited using this approach during Quarter 2. Additional Quality Assurance activity during Quarter 2 includes:

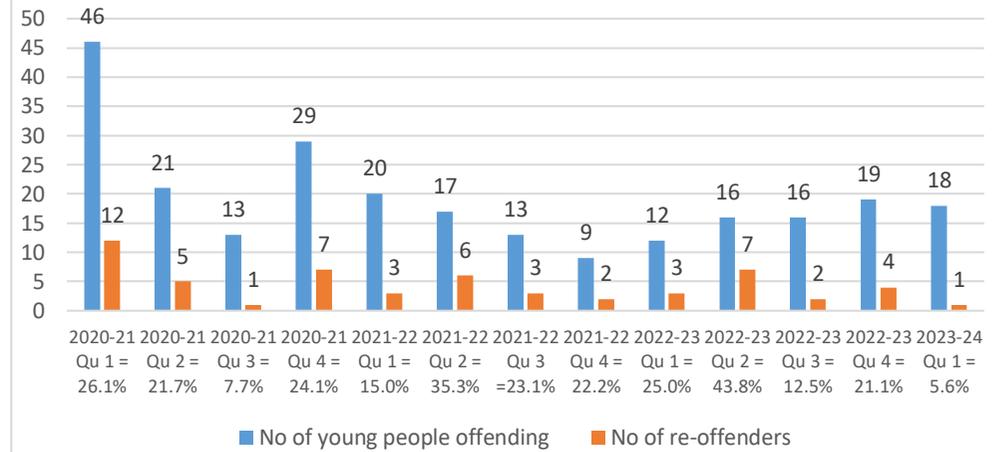
- “Practice Matters” week was held in October 2023 and was an incredible success. A total of 1,618 staff attended 22 workshops throughout the week. The passion of both presenters and practitioners was clear to see and provided an opportunity for us to reflect on successes, hear from the people we support and look at how we might develop our services for the future.
- The annual “Practice Matters” programme was launched in October and focuses on priority areas identified via audit activities. The improvement drive will focus on - All about the child (lived experience); chronologies, genograms, and recordings; supervision and management oversight; assessments and plans.
- Practice Matters forums for managers and practitioners have continued to be held. Sessions have been held in relation to Child Sexual Abuse for managers and “what good looks like” in assessments and case recordings for practitioners.
- Strengthening Practice meetings have been introduced – which are weekly meetings of senior operational managers and leaders have been introduced to scrutinise performance and the quality of practice via monitoring of action plans.
- Completion of case reviews, thematic reviews and individual management reviews.
- Development of practice guidance.
- Quality assurance process for Child Practice Reviews / Adult Practice Reviews launched to ensure our input into this process is effective and Regional Safeguarding Unit plans are SMART.

Youth Justice Service

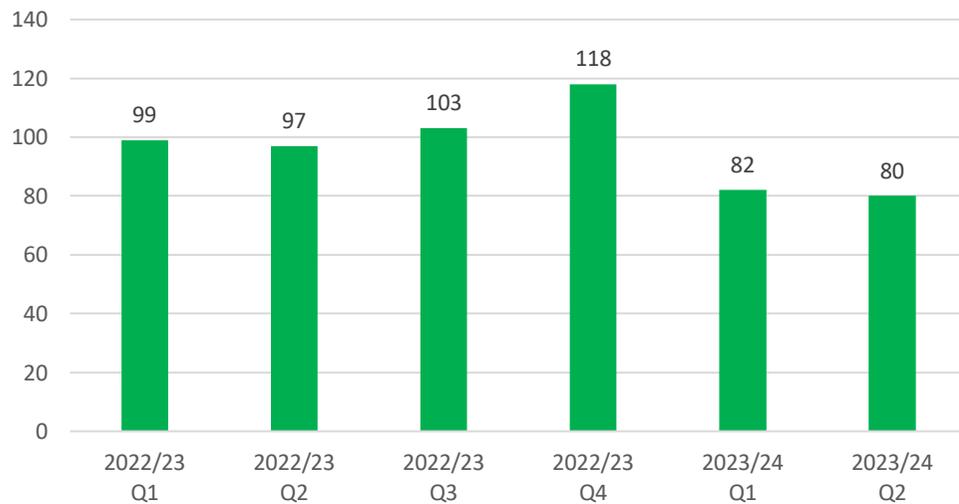
Number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System



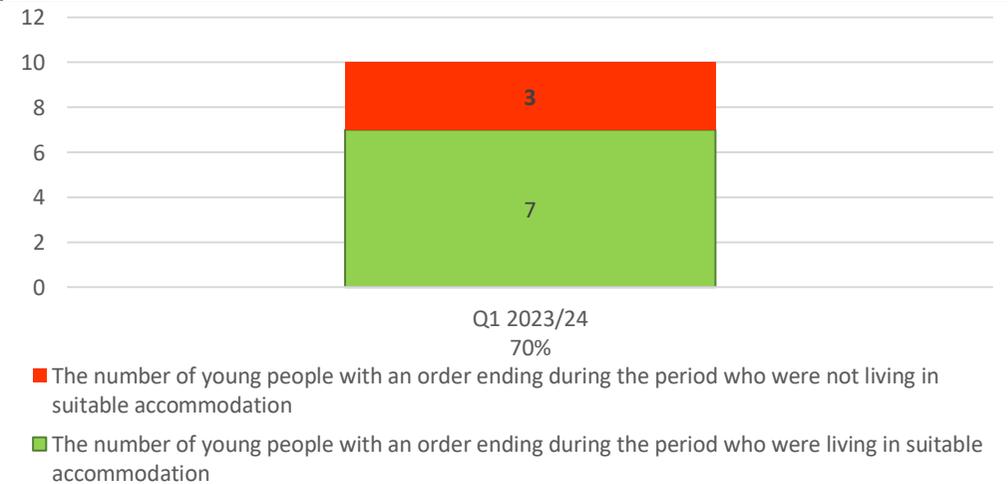
Percentage of Children Re-offending Within 6 Months of their Previous Offence



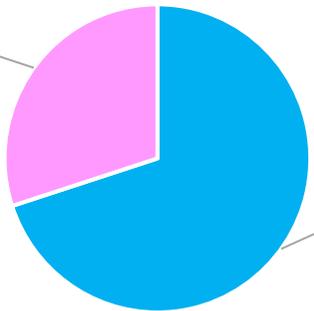
Number of Young People in Receipt of a Prevention Service from the Youth Justice Service



Percentage of Children with an Order Ending During the Period Who Were Living In Suitable Accommodation



Updated data to follow.

Percentage of Children with an Order Ending During the Period Who Were in Suitable Education, Training or Employment	Percentage of Children with an Order Ending During the Period Who Had an Identified Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) / Additional Learning Need (ALN)
<p>Data not yet available</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">During Quarter 1 2023/24</p>  <p>The number of young people with an order ending during the period who did not have an identified Special Education Need and Disability (SEND)/ Additional Learning Need (ALN), 3, 30%</p> <p>The number of young people with an order ending during the period who had an identified Special Education Need and Disability (SEND)/ Additional Learning Need (ALN), 7, 70%</p> <p>7 out of 10 (70%) young people with an order ending during Quarter 1 had an identified Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) / Additional Learning Need (ALN).</p> <p>Source: YJS Updated data to follow.</p>