

<b>CABINET</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No. 8</b>
<b>25 FEBRUARY 2013</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Sheila Scott, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Sue Westcott, Executive Director Children's Services	Tel. 863606

**IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE**

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
<b>FROM : Executive Director Children's Services</b>	<b>Deadline date : n/a</b>
1. That Cabinet notes the improvement activity and progress within Children's Services	

**1. ORIGIN OF REPORT**

1.1 This report is the first of a quarterly update on progress in implementing the actions and recommendations arising from the Ofsted Inspection.

**2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT**

2.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet with details of improvement actions undertaken since the November Cabinet meeting in response to the findings of the Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding carried out in August 2011.

2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.3. To take a leading role in promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area.

**3. TIMESCALE**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	<b>NO</b>
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**4. PROGRESS REPORT**

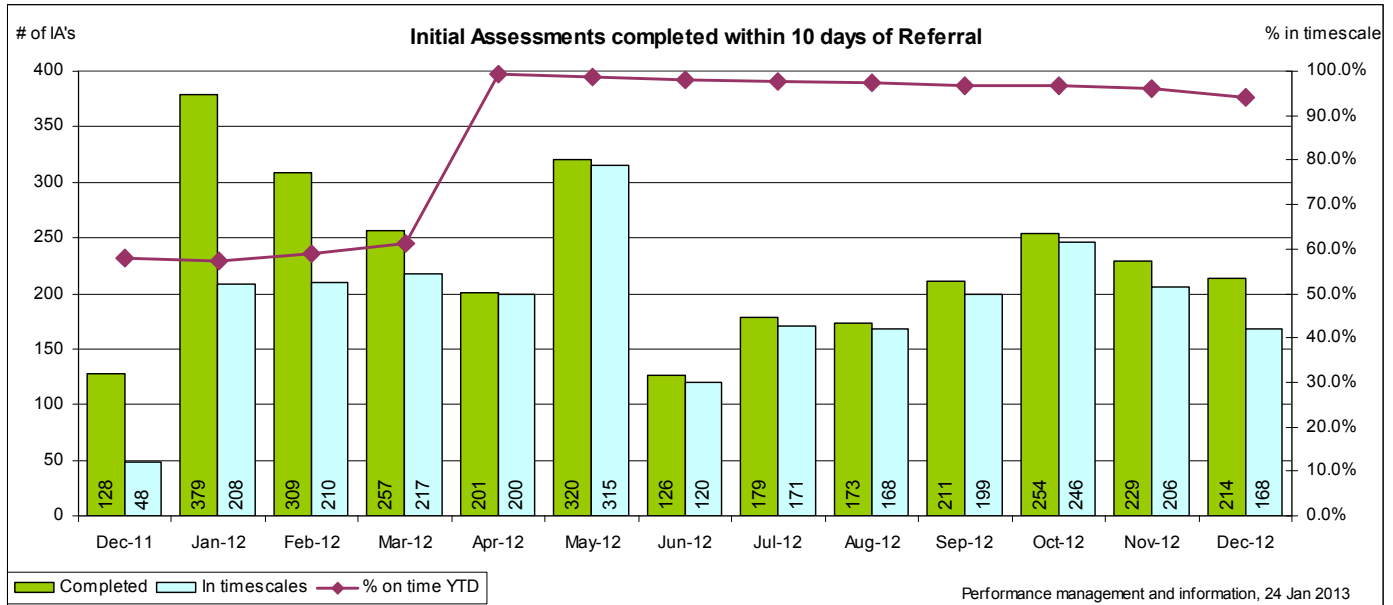
4.1 This report provides the Cabinet with an overview summary of the Council's performance since the last quarterly report to Cabinet in November 2012.

**4.2 Referrals**

Weekly referrals into Social Care are stabilising after a peak in May 2012. The current rate is 34.3%, higher than target (Dec 2012). In December 2012, the number of referrals was 216 as opposed to 451 in May 2012.

**4.3 Initial Assessments**

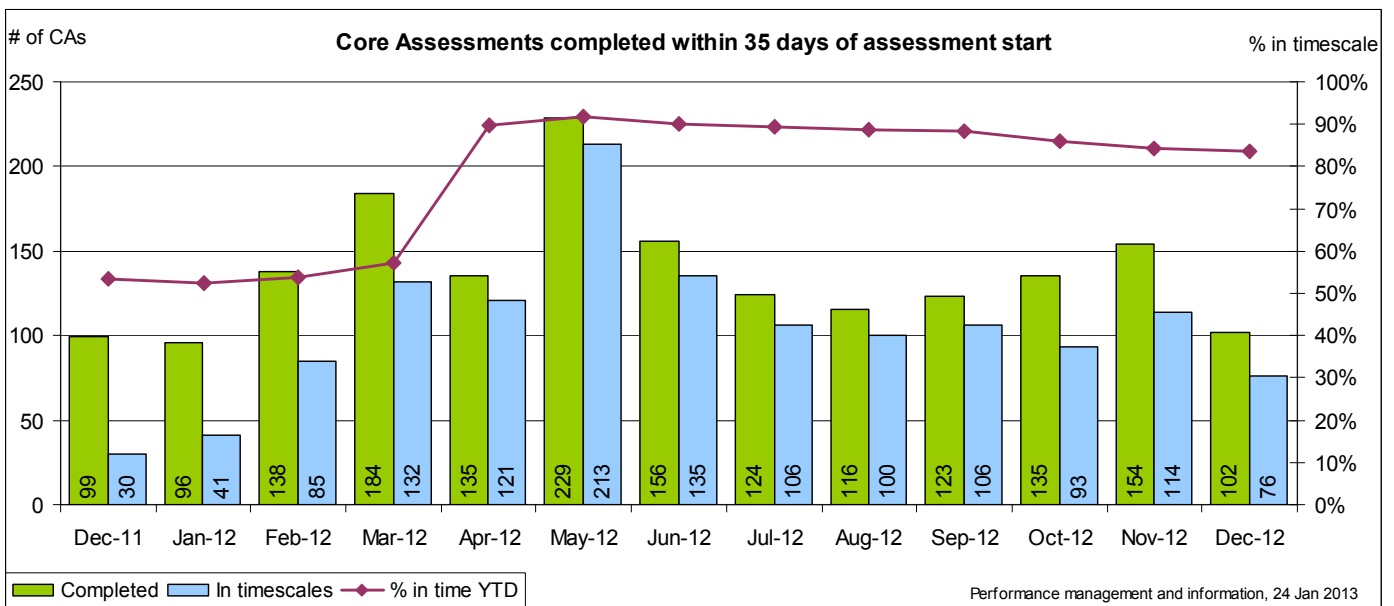
Timeliness of initial assessments remains good. The latest data for December 2012 shows 94% of Initial Assessments were completed in timescale. Although this is a 2% point drop from the previous month, the indicator is demonstrating strong performance and has remained consistently above target since April 2012.

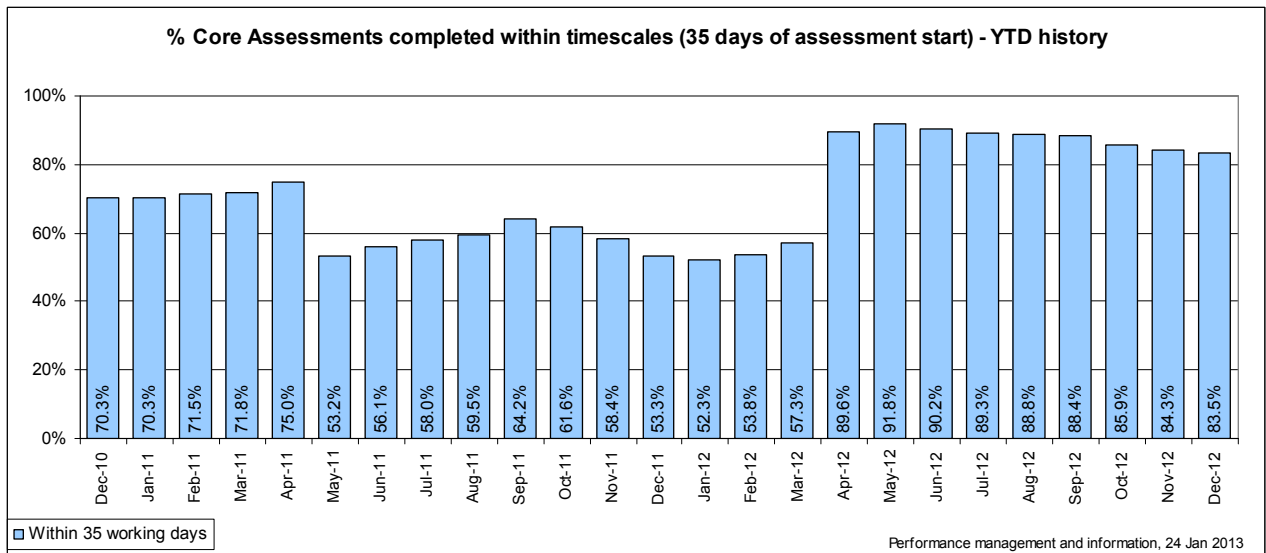


The number of re-referrals at the end of December 2012 is 36.3%. This is a 12.4 percentage point above target since March 2012 (36.1%). This number is too high (the SN result is 23.8%) and we are currently undertaking an audit to understand the reasons for this. The greater identification of need and historic underworking of cases could account for this.

#### 4.4 Core Assessments

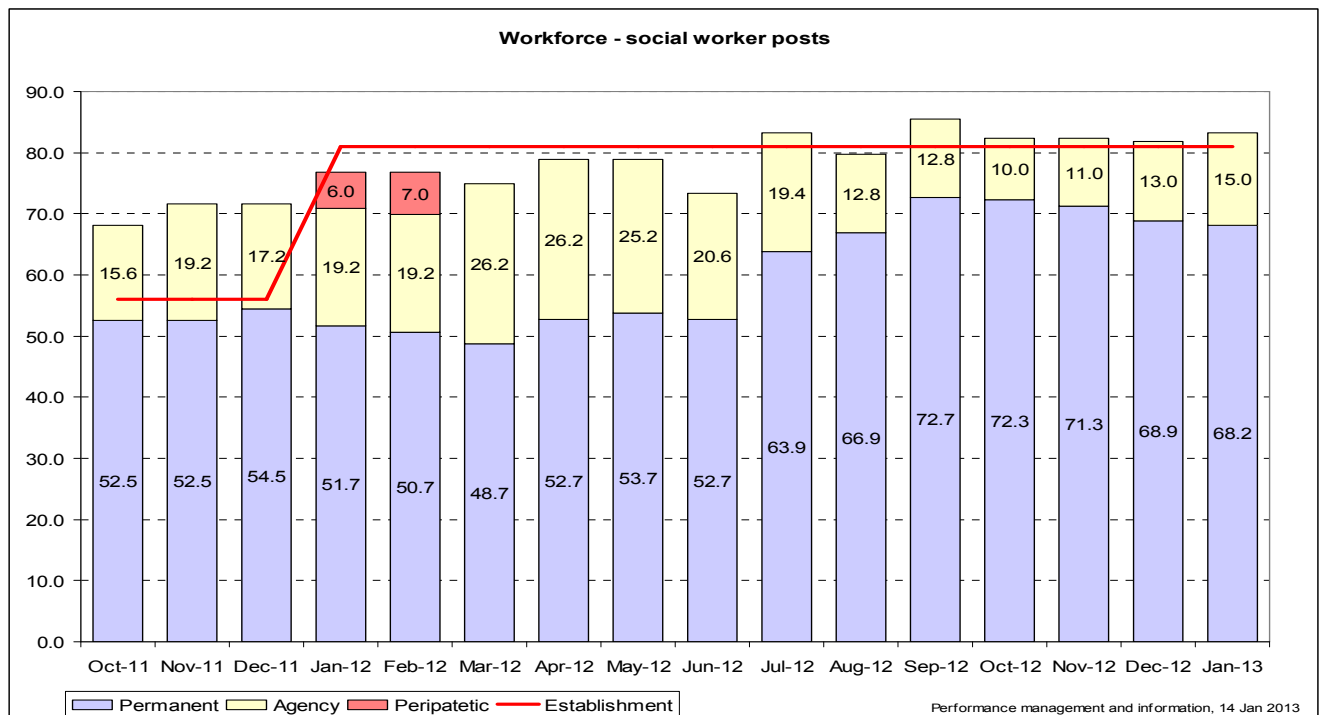
The number of Core Assessments completed in December 2012 is exactly the same as the previous year, so remains unchanged at 386 per 10,000 of the child population. However this is more than double the target of 173 per 10,000. The reason for this increase is predominantly the rise in the number of Section 47's (Child Protection enquiries). There have been 730 Section 47 enquiries completed between April and December 2012 of which only 38.4% had an outcome of a CP conference. This indicates that there is over use of the Section 47 as few meet the threshold for a conference. The Managers have been requested to fully interrogate the referral prior to designating it as a CP enquiry. This in conjunction with discussions with the police should decrease the number of Section 47's. This is important, not least because it is less punitive to children and families.





#### 4.5 Staffing

The number of agency staff within social care remains low against a staff establishment of 81, excluding adoption and fostering. There are currently 10.7fte vacancies (which includes 4 social workers appointed and currently awaiting a start date, and 1 social worker scheduled to leave at the end of February). 2 staff departures have been for personal reasons. The number of agency staff in place takes us over and above the establishment of 81 (by 2.2fte) due to the need to cover social workers on maternity leave. We are looking at refreshing our recruitment campaign as we cannot afford this to slip.



#### 4.6 Management Changes

Sue Westcott took up her role as DCS on 22 December 2012, following Malcolm Newsam's departure. Jean Imray took over from Sue Westcott as AD Safeguarding on that date. In this way there has been continuity in leadership.

The third tier posts at Head of Service level went out for advert and attracted 18 applications, 15 of which were interviewed. Appointments have now been made to all three posts: Head of Quality Assurance, Head of Referral /Assessment and Family Support and Head of Service for Family Support and Disability. The first two appointments were external, whilst the latter was the present Interim Head of Family Support .The two successful candidates are very experienced current Heads of Service in authorities rated 'good' by OFSTED . The response to this advertisement was excellent and demonstrates that quality professionals want to come and work here. One candidate aims to relocate.

The permanent post for the Assistant Director of Safeguarding is currently being recruited to with the aim of appointing in March to come into post May 2013.

The three vacant posts for Team Managers are currently out for national advertisement in the same publication that attracted the Heads of Service. All of these posts are currently covered by agency Team Managers. Our aim remains to establish a permanent and stable workforce.

We have been unsuccessful in recruiting to the Chair of the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board despite what was considered a good field at interview. Unfortunately the candidates did not meet our requirements .We are currently re advertising with the aim of appointing in February. Meanwhile, the Assistant Chief Constable is chairing the Board.

#### 4.7 Refreshed Vision and Priorities

Children's Services DMT has refreshed its vision and priorities within an updated Improvement Plan.

**Our vision is: “One Children’s Service – Helping children be their best”**

**Our priorities are:**

- Providing Children and Families with Early Support
- Helping Families with Problems and Keeping Children Safe
- Giving the best Opportunities to Children and Young People in Care
- Working in Partnership with Schools and others to make sure Children Succeed
- Supporting our staff to be outstanding

I have set key actions for a delivery plan which is realistic and achievable and builds upon our improvement journey. The new improvement plan includes actions to improve our education attainment and to deliver on our Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy. Our CP External Improvement Board will continue to monitor our CP priorities and actions.

### 5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Partner agencies through the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Board and the External Improvement Board are involved in the improvement activity. Members, led by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, continue to be actively engaged in challenging and supporting this improvement activity. A Member Task and Finish Group continues to meet regularly to examine the improvement programme and the evidence around for progress. Regular progress reports have also been considered by the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee.

### 6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- 6.1 The improvement activity has been planned to secure the following outcomes laid out in the Children's Services Improvement programme:
- Providing confident leadership across children's services

- Putting in place effective front-line practice
- Creating an organisation fit for purpose
- Strengthening partnerships to make a difference
- Becoming the employer of choice in the region
- Robustly managing performance

## **7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The Council needs to continue to deliver improvements to safeguard children and in the longer term put in place a sustainable high quality Children's Service in Peterborough.

## **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 Not applicable

## **9. IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The cost of the improvement programme can be met from within existing budgets. Resources are available to secure improvement in the immediate and longer term.
- 9.2 The Secretary of State has the power to issue a statutory notice if he or she deems this is required to secure the necessary improvements within a failing service.

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None

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