

<b>CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 10</b>
<b>9 MARCH 2015</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## Report of the Executive Director of Children’s Services

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### DIRECTOR’S REPORT FOR SOCIAL CARE PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE

#### 1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to continue to update the committee on sustained performance in Children’s Social Care.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 To note the progress made to achieve an OfSTED rating of good/outstanding.

#### 3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies “Improving Health” and “Supporting Vulnerable People” as priorities. A quality Children’s Social Care service is key to delivering the right support for vulnerable children and families.

#### 4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Following an Ofsted Inspection in August 2011, the Council has engaged in a programme to secure rapid improvement. This improvement will be driven by three key elements:

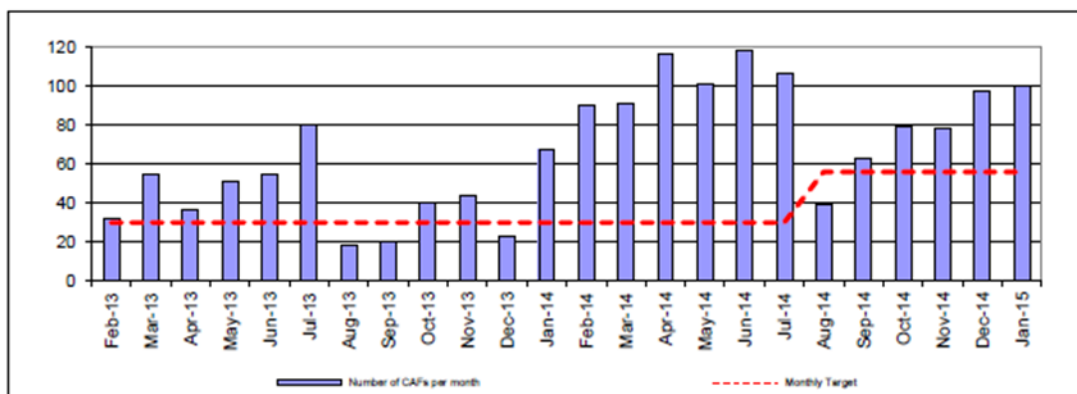
- Self Assessment document (for use with OfSTED)
- The Children’s Services Single Delivery Plan
- The Ofsted Action Plan which focuses effort on what we must prioritise
- The leadership of Members and officers in delivering the required changes

4.2 The Council’s progress is closely monitored by this Committee and the Internal Improvement Board.

#### 5.0 KEY ISSUES as at 31 January 2015

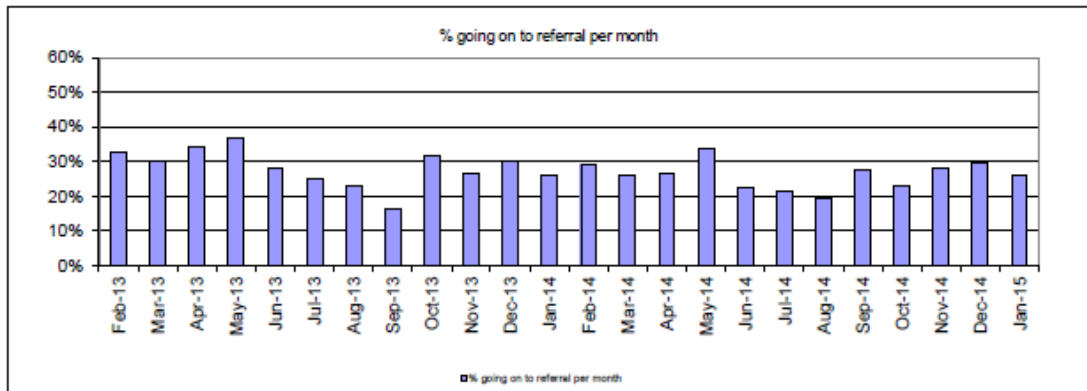
##### 5.1 Early Intervention Assessments (CAFs)

100 CAFs were opened in January which is in line with the previous month and notably higher than the same time last year (67 in January 2014). This is 62.3%, higher than the target.



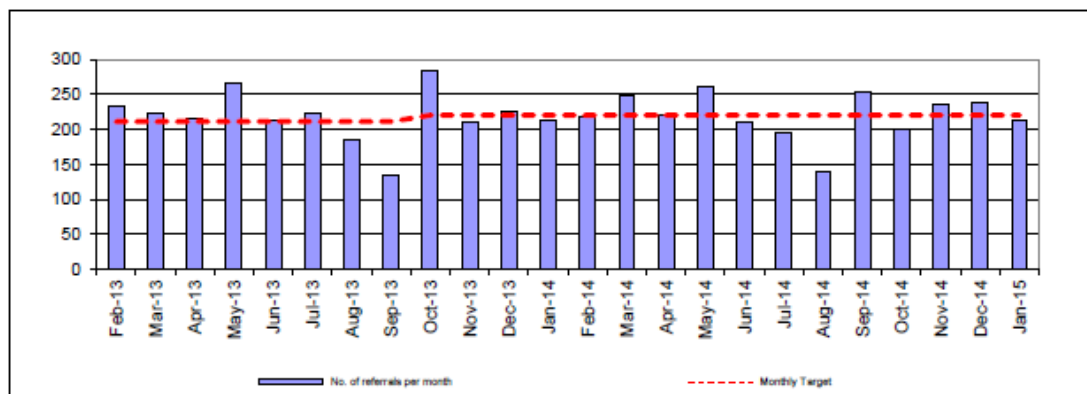
## 5.2 Number of Contacts

The number of contacts remains relatively stable. There were 806 contacts coming into the service of which 212 went onto referral. This is in line with last year (26.3% compared to 25.8% in January 2014).



## 5.3 Number of Referrals

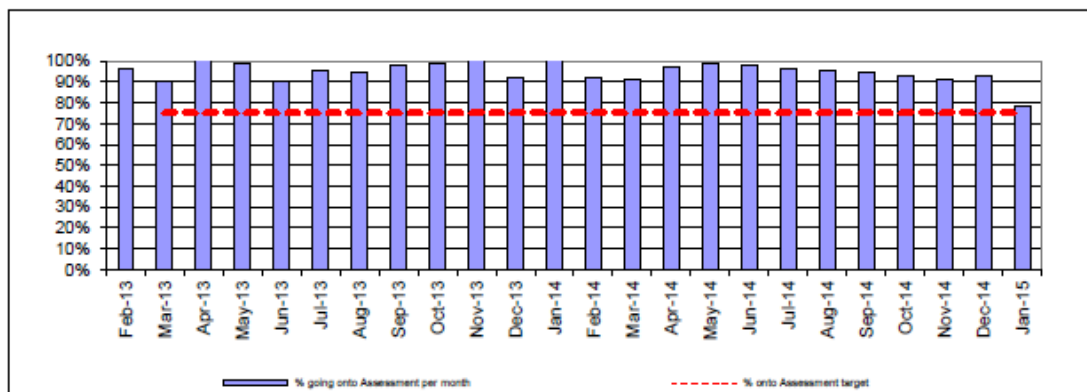
There were 212 referrals in January 2015 which is slightly lower than the previous month of 237. The rolling 12 months rate per 10,000 has decreased slightly to 584 which is just 2.9% below target.



## 5.4 Referrals progressing to Single Assessment

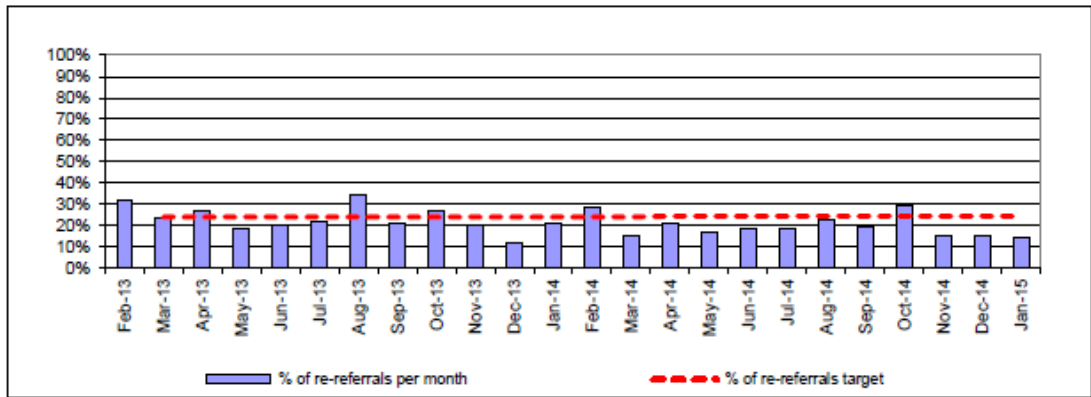
From these 212 referrals 167 had a single assessment, a conversion of 78.8%.

This feels low as nearly all referrals should progress to assessment. The figures in this dataset are being investigated and will be reported at the next board.



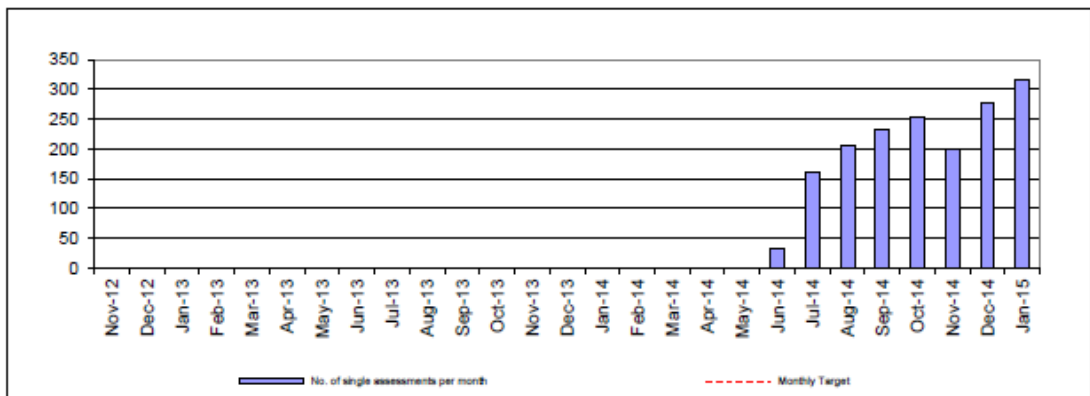
### 5.5 Re-referrals

The year to date re-referral rate at 18.7% is lower than the same time last year (22%). It is also lower than the outturn for last year which was 21.9% ('013/14). This denotes that cases are being worked more thoroughly.



### 5.6 Single Assessments

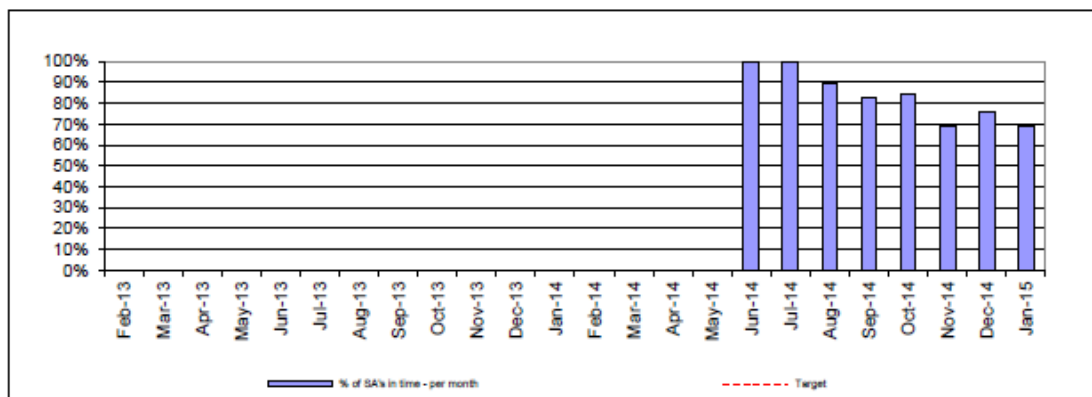
There were 317 single assessments completed during January. This is considerably higher than the previous month at 276.



### 5.7 Single Assessments Timescales

86.4% of single assessments completed up to the end January were in timescale.

A recent unannounced internal audit has highlighted that entering a strategy discussion on Liquidlogic requires the opening and closure of a single assessment.



## 5.8 Section 47 Enquiries

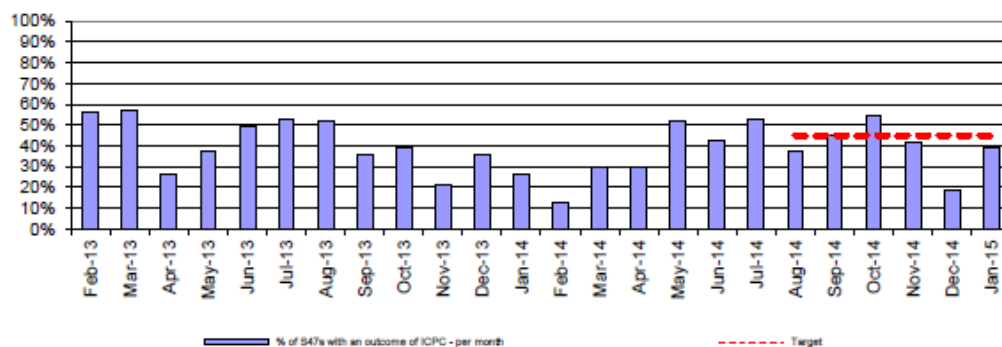
69 Section 47 enquiries were completed during January and 29 of these (39.1%) had the outcome of an Initial Children Protection Conference. The year to date figure is 43.6% which is higher than at the same time last year. (37.1% January 2014).

Given that so few Child Protection enquiries resulted in a Child Protection conference it is questionable whether there should have been a Child Protection enquiry.

### Exception reporting

There were 42 children from 20 families that did not come to Conference following a Section 47 enquiry in January 2015.

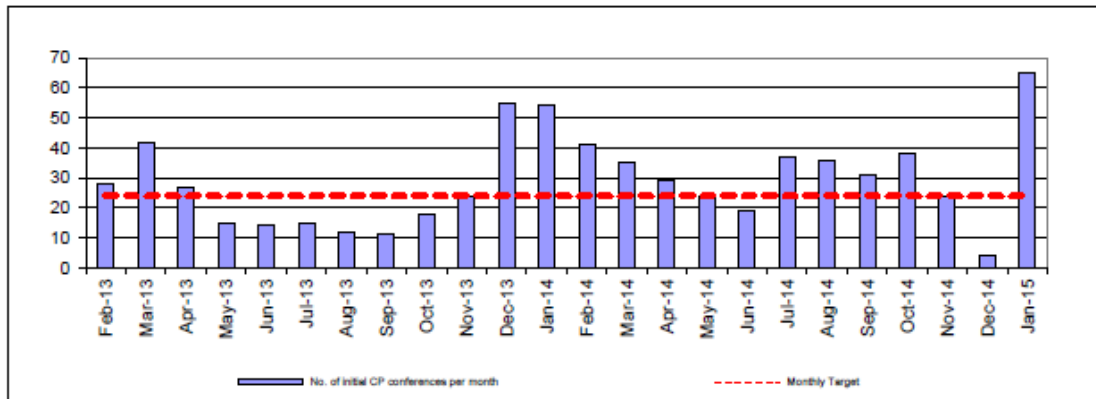
- 1 child did go to icpc and this is a liquid logic recording error.
- 2 children were subject to investigation in Peterborough but returned to home address in Bedfordshire who followed up investigation.
- 2 children were investigated due to concerns that they were in contact with a registered sex offender, which was unsubstantiated.
- 6 children (1 family) were investigated due to risks of sexual abuse which were substantiated but mother took appropriate protective action and father remanded.
- 7 children were subject to section 47 inquiry following concerns referred by school, friend of family, mother that a child had been sexually abused. These concerns were unsubstantiated following investigation.
- The remaining 24 children were all subject to section 47 investigations due to information / concern about physical harm which on investigation were either unsubstantiated (5) or substantiated but not considered at risk of ongoing harm due to non-abusive partner response to the allegation and ability to protect (5 children 1 family), or substantiated but incident and or injury not considered significant / serious enough to warrant child protection conference and ongoing assessment as child in need to be completed.



## 5.9 Initial Child Protection Conferences

There has been a sharp increase in the number of children who had an Initial Child Protection Conference from 24 in November 2014, 4 in December 2014 and 65 children in January 2015. This is 31.8% above target with the rolling 12 month rate per 10,000 is 85.1%.

This is needs led. The DCS has dip sampled 8 of these cases and the threshold has been met in each one.



### 5.10 Number of Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

As at 31 January 2015 there were 213 children who were subject to a Child Protection Plan.

This equates to 51.3% per 10,000 which is 19.1% higher than target.

### 5.11 Child Protection Conference Timescales

During January 2015 3 conferences were held outside of timescales which equates to 6 children.

The reasons for these were

- 1 conference request was received late into the Child Protection team
- 1 transfer in conference and the team were unclear about the transfer in process which caused a delay in the request being made
- 1 conference was delayed due to issues in allocation within the team.

All of these have been addressed with the relevant managers.

### 5.12 Child Protection Visits in Timescale

87.7% of children with a child protection plan received a statutory visit within timescale. This is a slight decrease from the previous month.

#### Exception Reporting

Within Family Support there were 22 children showing as not having a statutory visit within timescale. Of these 22 children 7 are no longer on a child protection plan to Peterborough City Council and their previous episodes require closing on the ICS system.

3 children are out of the country after returning to Lithuania with their mother. CFAB have been informed and they will remain open until they have been seen safe and well in Lithuania.

Of the other 12 children only one statutory visit was completed outside of timescale, the reason for this is due to the young person being out of city and a review meeting was scheduled within days of the due date for the statutory visit. The team manager agreed for the social worker to combine the statutory visit with the review due to the long distance of placement.

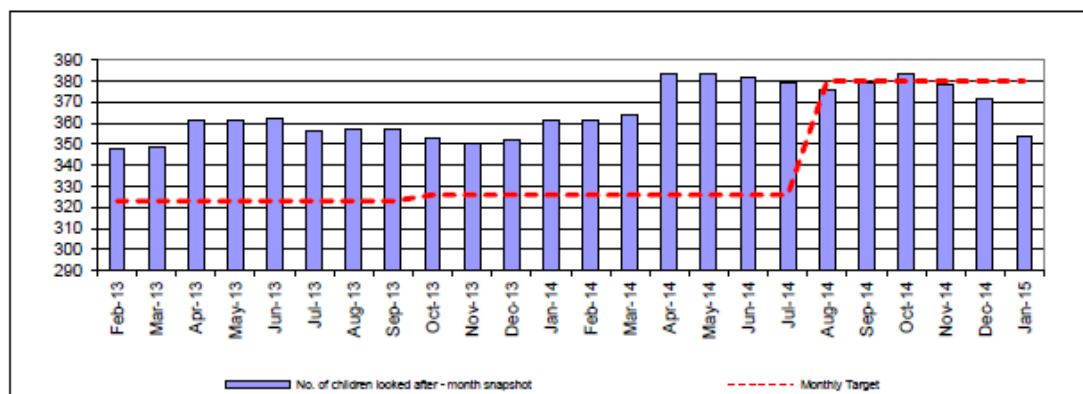
Within the Children with Disabilities Team one child went to Portugal with her father on 11 December and did not return as planned but was left in the care of her aunt. and A referral was made to CFAB and a visit was conducted on 19 December. There is no current plan for the child to return to the UK and a request has been made to IRO to close down CP status.

Within FRT there was one statutory visit out of timescale. The social worker made several attempts to contact mother to arrange, and arrived at the house unannounced but was unable to

gain access. The visit took place on 6 February.

### Number of Looked After Children

5.13 At the end of January the number of children looked after 354 a net decrease of 18 compared to the previous month (372 in December 2014) The number of children looked after is currently equivalent to a rate of 78.7 per 10,000. At the time of writing this report there are 344 children looked after.



### Looked After Children Visits in Timescale

5.14 92.2% of LAC children had a statutory visit within timescale.

#### Exception Reporting

7 of the visits were held within timescale but were not recorded on Liquidlogic. 3 visits were re-arranged to accommodate young people's availability but fell outside of timescale, 1 was re-arranged due to availability of foster carers. 1 young person is actively avoiding contact with their social worker, although being seen by other professionals and carers. 1 case was seen by a life story worker who recorded these but are not seen as statutory visits. There were 6 visits which did not take place due to social worker being sick. All visits outside of timescale have now been held.

1 young person went missing one night after being accommodated. All necessary alerts have been put in place and policy has been followed.

### Children in Need

5.15 The number of CIN has remained relatively stable (1,410 in December 2013, 1,167 in March 2014 and 1,227 in January 2015).

What has risen is the complexity of cases; and an increasing number of children and families where English is not the first language. Approximately 202 CIN are from the Eastern European bloc, compared to 690 White British, 90 mixed heritage, 104 Asian, 35 Black (amongst other ethnic minorities). This puts pressure on out interpreting services, together with considerable diversity issues.

We have based a dedicated interpreter into our First Response team and recruited an Eastern European speaking social worker and a family support worker who speaks several Asian languages.

Ethnicity is not being consistently recorded and needs to be. Out of 212 referrals, 65 had no information obtained. This is being addressed.

### LAC Health Assessments

- 5.16 Performance continues to be low with just 7 cases having an Initial Health Assessment within 28 days since April 2014.

Dental checks also remain low although there is a slight increase to 76.7%. This is predominantly a data issue, but needs to be more frequently monitored by the IROs.

### **Adoption and Fostering**

- 5.17 Year to date there have been 29 adoptions which is slightly higher than the same time last year.

This is excellent performance.

The fostering service are on track to recruit a net additional 18 fostering households by the end of the financial year.

### **Children Missing from Home and Education**

- 5.18 There was one child looked after who went missing during January with a total of 1 incident. This indicates our LAC population is settled.

**MH** is 14 years old, he went missing from grandmother's care. He went to his mother's house but she told him clearly that he could not stay as per written agreement. Rather than returning to grandmother's house he went to a friend's house and stayed the night. Grandmother collected him the following day. Procedure was followed and risks managed through intervention.

### **Update on First Response/MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)**

- 5.19 The First Response Screening team came into effect on 27th October 2014. This team consists of 1 team manager, 2 social workers and 1 support worker. They are responsible for processing all contacts that come into children social care, either directly or via the MASH. A new permanent Team manager (Stuart Lowe) for this team started on 1 February 2015 and a permanent Head of Service starts on 1 April 2015.

Alongside this core team are co-located the:

4 CSE workers,

CAF co-ordinators,

Police Missing from home worker (new person in post from February 2015)

Police CSE worker

The CSE workers hold a caseload and provide advice support to other professionals. They also assist in the triaging of new contacts relating to CSE. Two of the social worker posts are being changed to resource worker posts. Although not qualified social workers it is considered that these workers will be able to offer a significant direct intervention / supportive type work and relationships to this client group.

The CAF coordinators since December 2014 are located in the team and assist in triaging referrals and actively facilitate the setting up of CAFs when cases do not meet the threshold for Children's Services, but early coordinated help is warranted.

Interviews have taken place for the joint funded health post and the successful applicant is expected to join the team in May (serving 3 months' notice). It is anticipated that this post will make a real difference to develop multi agency working between Children social care and health in the not only the key area of safeguarding and strategy meetings/ discussions, but also more broadly.

Further discussions have taken place with woman's aid and they are in the process of recruiting a full time post that will be based alongside the screening team. This post will assist the screening team in triaging domestic violence referrals and also directly work to support the development of appropriate early help responses to Domestic violence, when they do not meet the threshold for

referral through to children social care.

The MASH Project Board continues to meet and Stuart Lowe will be attending the MASH management meetings.

The Police and crime Commissioner Sir Graham Bright visited the Peterborough site of the county wide MASH on 28 January 2015 and took the opportunity to meet with senior management and front line staff in the MASH / screening team.

## **Workforce**

5.20 All Team Manager Posts in Children's Social Care are now filled permanently.

We are waiting for checks to be finalised and signed off for 2 Family Support Team Managers who are working their notice periods now.

First Response already have 2 Team Managers in post with a 3rd Manager to start on the 30th March.

1 Family Support Team Manager has started in post after leaving a Locum Post in another Authority.

This will enable us to reduce the cost of agency Team Managers and this will have significant impact on the agency budgets.

Richard Powell will join as the Permanent Head of Service for Family Support on the 30th March and the new Permanent Assistant Director, Nicola Curley begins in post on the 2nd March. The permanent appointment of Richard Powell will also reduce agency costs.

Advertising for the remaining Head of Service post is currently in the Guardian and the closing date for this is the end of February.

It has also been agreed that the new cohort of NQSW's can be recruited for and this will make up 15% of the establishment which is 12fte.

As a result of NQSW recruitment, this will release a number of agency workers that are currently filling vacancies.

In addition to this, we have a new Social Worker joining LAC on the 23rd March permanently.

An agreement has been reached regionally (Bedford Borough, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, PCC, Southend, Central Beds, Thurrock, Luton, Norfolk and Suffolk) in regard to the capping of Agency Worker pay rates. This agreement will significantly reduce the cost of employing agency staff and the premiums that PCC incur as a result of employing agency staff.

It has been agreed that pay rates will not exceed the following: -

Social Worker with 2 years PQ Experience - £28 per hour.

Advanced Practitioner - £32 per hour.

Team Manager - £38 per hour.

There are currently 25 agency staff in post, these are covering vacancies and will be released once permanent staff are recruited.

Agency Social Workers make up 24.6% of the Establishment at the moment – This figure includes Fostering and Adoption Staff.

There are 3 vacancies that remain outstanding and that require an agency post once the notice of the permanent member of staff has served notice.



Plans are in place to recruit agency staff to fill this void.

## **Early Intervention and Prevention**

### **5.21 Strategic Changes to Delivery of Early Help Offer**

On 12<sup>th</sup> February, Employment Committee confirmed appointments to the following roles:

- Corporate Director for People and Communities;
- Service Director for Adults and Communities, and;
- Service Director for Children and Safeguarding.

In addition, the Service Director for Education and Resources will also now report to the Corporate Director. This new structure, including the creation of the People and Communities Service, becomes operational on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

Strategic leadership for Early Help Services will lie with the Service Director for Adults and Communities. This will mean that for the first time, the strategic lead for Early Help services for children and young people will also have accountability for delivery of the wide range of community services available in the City, including Housing Service, Youth in Localities services and the prevention services offered through the Youth Offending Services.

This new structure will also enable us to bring together prevention and early help services for children and young people with those that exist for vulnerable adults. This should lead to smarter working as very often, vulnerable children and young people are growing up in families where there are also vulnerable adults – adults who have some mental health or learning difficulties, for example.

More broadly, the creation of the People and Communities Service will enable us to think differently about how we deliver long term improved outcomes for children, young people and adults by bringing commissioning and service delivery together in a way that makes sense to how people live their lives – i.e. in families and communities.

#### Early Help Assessments

The number of new Early Help Assessments being completed in Peterborough continues to increase and indeed the rate per 10,000 has more than doubled in the last 12 months. This now stands at 240 assessments per 10,000 children and young people. The equivalent figure was 112 per 10,000 in February 2013.

This is very good as it indicates that more and more children and young people are being supported by our partners at a prevention and early help level. Most of these assessments are completed by colleagues in schools, health settings and children's centres and this increase indicates good evidence of people working closely together to secure the best outcomes for children and young people.

#### Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub [MASH]

We now also have an Early Help Coordinator located within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, or MASH. This person's role is to help to encourage practitioners in partner agencies to undertake early help assessments on children and young people who have been referred to Children's Social Care but who do not have needs that meet threshold.

Early indications are very positive in that significantly higher numbers of children and young people not meeting social care thresholds but for whom an Early Help Assessment is likely to be beneficial are now accessing such an assessment. This is because the Early Help Coordinator in the MASH is in a better position to spend some time identifying which practitioner may be in the

best place to initiate an Early Help Assessment, and can also offer this practitioner support to begin working in this way if necessary – all capacity that was not previously available.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Sustained improvement.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 Partner agencies, parents and children are well engaged in all the social care activity.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

8.1 This Committee will continue to receive a regular update on progress.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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

- 9.1
- Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding: Peterborough 6<sup>th</sup> September 2011
  - Ofsted Unannounced Inspection of contact referral and assessment arrangements 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011
  - Ofsted Safeguarding and Looked after Children Inspection: Peterborough 21<sup>st</sup> May 2010
  - Ofsted Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children: inspection report 8 March 2013

## **10. APPENDICES**

10.1 None