

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 10
22 SEPTEMBER 2014	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Sheila Scott, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Sue Westcott – Executive Director of Children’s Services	Tel. 01733 863606

CHILDREN’S SERVICES UPDATE REPORT

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM : Sue Westcott, Executive Director of Children’s Services	Deadline date : N/A
To note the contents of this report:	
<p>Key points (as of July 2014):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in CAFs • Fewer contacts • Single Assessment launched • Decrease in re-referrals • Number of CP and LAC • Recruitment and retention 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 Quarterly updated Director’s report to Cabinet.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

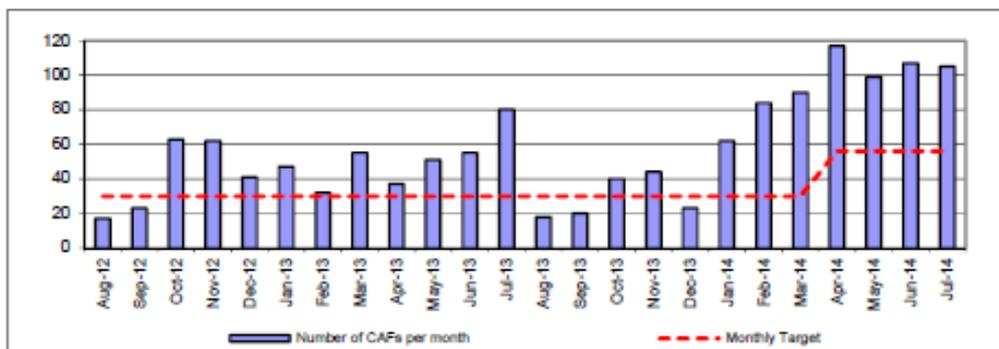
2.1 To report to Cabinet on Children’s Services improvement.

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. SOCIAL CARE PERFORMANCE

3.1 CAFs (early intervention assessments)

105 CAFs were completed with a rolling rate of 179.8. This has already exceeded the new target by 21.6 %.



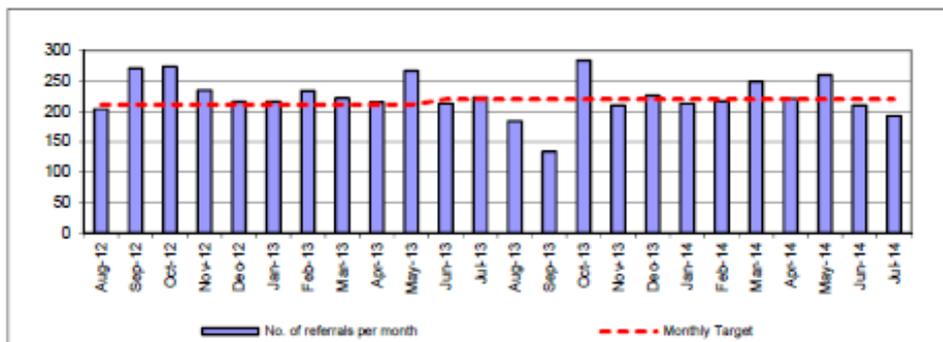
3.2 Number of Contacts

Fewer contacts came in last month: 905 compared to 926 the previous month. Fewer went on to referral: 193 compared to 210. This means that the conversion rate is 25.8%. There is no statistical neighbour or national data that this can be compared to. The performance is very good.

An external auditor has been employed to test out our thresholds for contacts and progression to referral as well as the regular dip sampling.

3.3 Number of Referrals

There were 193 referrals in July, which is slightly lower than the previous month of 210. The rate of referrals at 578.0 is lower than the statistical neighbour result of 634.9 per 10,000.



The re-referral rate remains stable.

3.4. Number of Initial Assessments

21 initial assessments were completed in the month; higher than the 230 in April. Initial assessments have been phased out and replaced by the single assessment.

3.5 Single/Initial Assessments Timescales

The data for this month is skewed by having two systems running in parallel with each other.

The year to end date for initial assessments, at 79%, is however, better than the same time last year (75.6% in time in July 2013).

158 single assessments were completed in July, of which 100% were within timescale. 190 completed since the launch of the single assessment, all of which were in timescale.



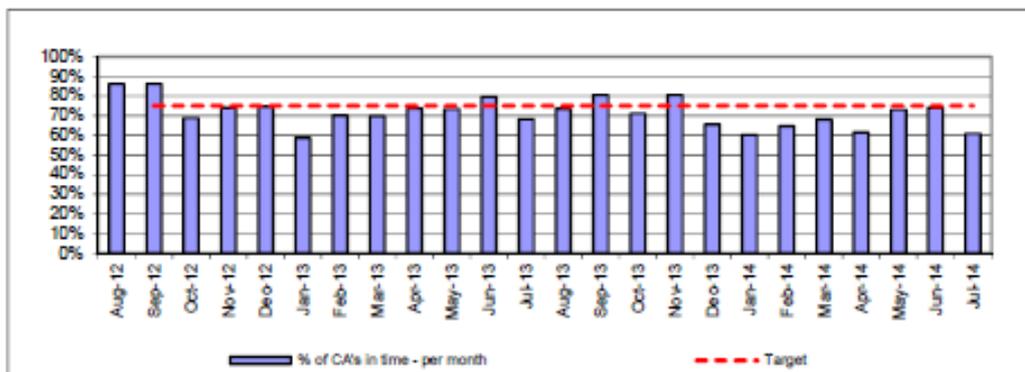
(We went live with the Single Assessment on 16 June, so no new initial assessments were opened in July.)

3.6 Number of Core Assessments

Core assessments have also now been replaced by the single assessment. 156 were completed during July.

3.7 Core Assessments Timescales

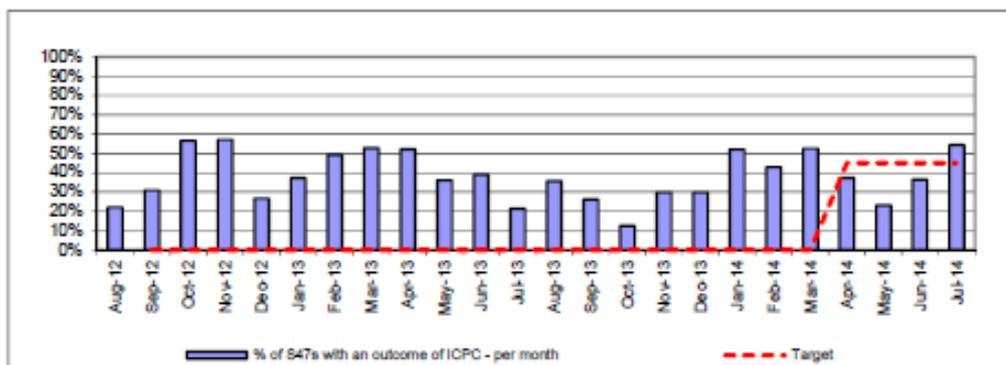
The percentage of core assessments completed in timescale declined slightly to 67.5%, which is lower than last year, and the result of the return to three front door teams.



(Core Assessments shown for July are existing cores that are still ongoing.)

3.8 Section 47 Enquiries

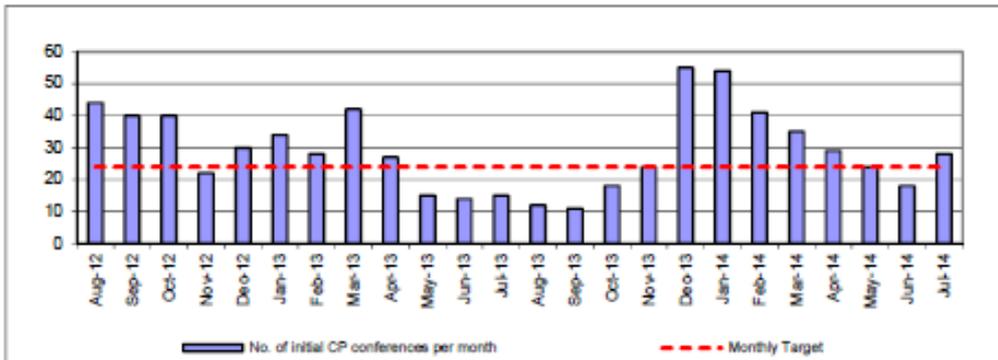
The number of child protection enquiries completed during July, was 79, of which 43 resulted in conference.



(April 2014, was the first time a target was set for conversion rates.)

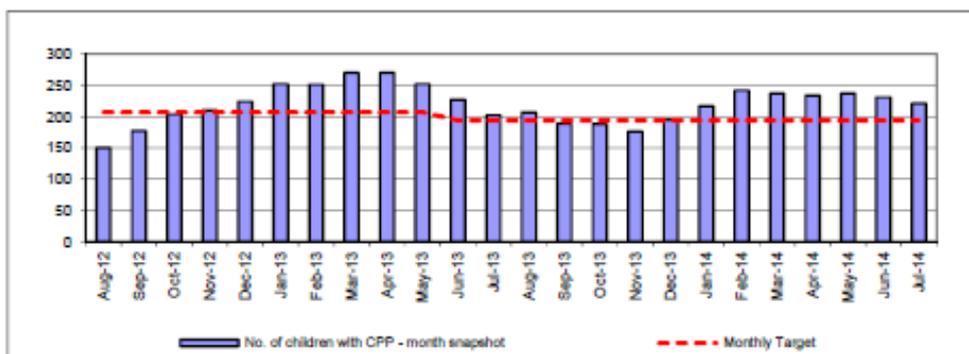
3.9 Child Protection Conferences

The number of conferences has seen a steady decline since February 2014 to a more manageable figure of 28 in July. This is above target owing to the complexity of need and risk and large sibling groups.



3.10 Number of Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

The number of children subject to a child protection plan has decreased to 221 from an all time high of 270 at the end of April 2013. This indicator is a rate of 49.1 children per 10,000 which is still 13.9% higher than the target of 43.1 children per 10,000.



3.11 Child Protection Visits in Timescale

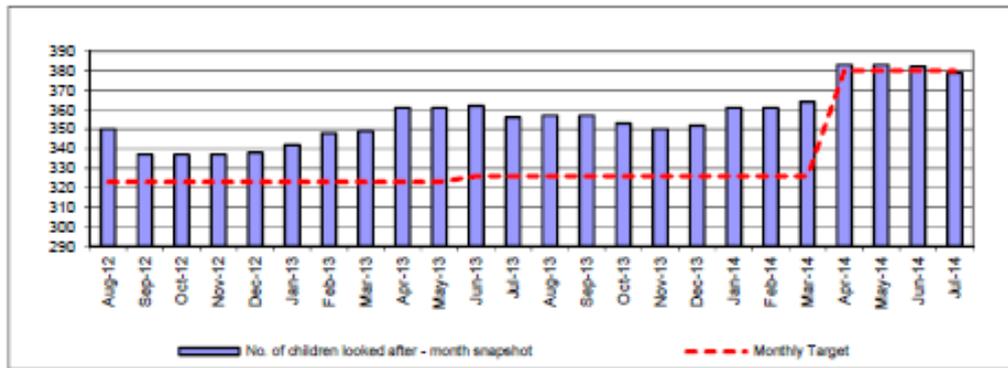
206 statutory visits were completed within the month of July, 181 of which were completed within timescales. 25 visits were not recorded as being within timescales. 15 children were made subject to a child protection plan during the July period, where the timescale for a statutory visit was reached.

3.12 Number of Looked After Children

At the end of July, 379 children were looked after: a net reduction of 4 compared to end of May.

The number of looked after children remains relatively high compared to previous years and is currently equivalent to a rate of 84.2% per 10,000. We have audited all children subject to Section 20 to see if there is any drift and are now checking out the findings. Early indicators are that few have drifted and plans are clear.

The number of admissions during July at 10, is slightly higher than the previous month, but just under our target of 11.



3.13 Update on First Response/MASH

The Countywide **MASH** (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) comes into effect on 1 September 2014, the next stage of the evolutionary development of what has hitherto been called the **MARU** (Multi-Agency Referral Unit).

To all intents and purposes, in the early stages, this will amount to little more than a name change for Children’s Services as the core business and the way in which it is conducted will change only very slightly. During the following weeks and months though, as other partners join the MASH, either through co-location or integration, the way in which we conduct our business will change and mean that we shall be better able to share information leading to improved decision-making and outcomes for children, young people, and their families.

The MASH will operate from two bases, one at Godmanchester in Cambridgeshire and the other from Bayard Place in Peterborough. There will not be a discrete new team at Peterborough, but as now, the core function and business of the MASH (primarily the conduct of Section 47 Strategy Discussions and Enquiries) will be met by the First Response teams. The key changes that are to come into effect in the near future that will significantly enhance the information sharing and decision-making processes will be the co-location and integration of other key partners.

Work is at an advanced stage now to recruit a full-time Health practitioner to sit within the FRT at Bayard Place. Similarly, a CAF/Connecting families coordinator is being recruited and discussions are underway with Peterborough Women’s Aid to identify a resource that might be located within the FRT to contribute to Section 47 discussions, and also to aid the provision of early assistance to victims of Domestic Abuse at a lower level than might otherwise be picked up by other existing services.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary are locating two colleagues from their Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Persons team at Bayard Place to further strengthen and develop the relationship with our own CSE/Missing children resources, and Peterborough City Council Adults Service are also committed to joining the MASH (as are Cambridgeshire County Council Adults Services) and this is a very welcome development.

Stronger links too are being developed with colleagues in the Housing Department, Integrated Offender Management Service and other agencies such as drug and alcohol services, so that in addition to those co-located services, there is an additional network of single points of contact with other agencies and services that can be called upon as required to contribute to Strategy discussions and risk management strategies.

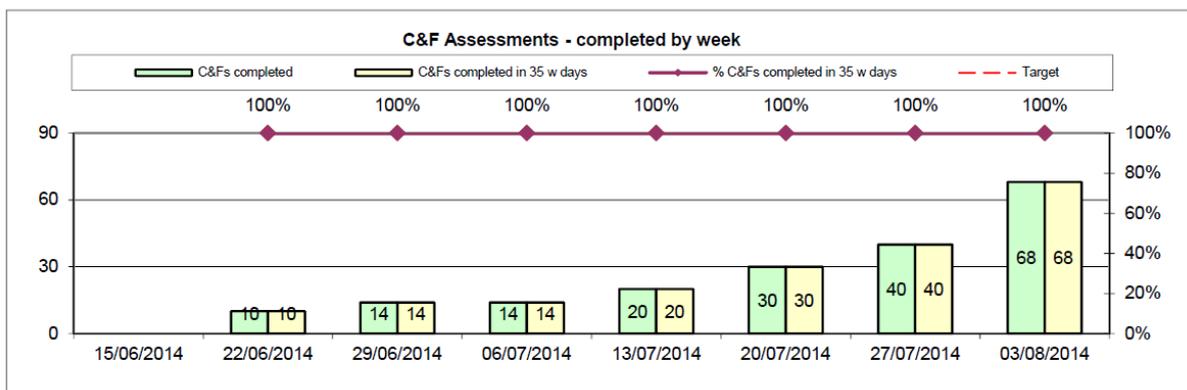
The MASH Project Board continues to meet and has produced a development plan that pulls together, in one document, the different strands of activity that are currently underway. The Head of Service (First Response) is a vice-chair of the Board. The MASH operational management group also meets regularly and is focussed on developing practice and processes to improve consistency and outcomes. A First Response team manager is a member of this group.

3.14 Single Assessment

The Child & Family (single) Assessment was introduced on 15 June 2014. This followed a period of development that involved consideration of the learning identified by Local Authorities that had already introduced similar assessments; consultation with practitioners and managers; and technical development involving consultants from Liquidlogic and our own Performance team.

The Child and Family Assessment replaced the Initial and Core Assessments. Daily, weekly, and monthly performance and management information reports have had to be adjusted to reflect this change and for a period of time, whilst the last remaining Core Assessments were being completed (having been commenced prior to 16 June), have had to represent both the old and the new assessments.

By 3rd August, as this report was being compiled, 395 Assessments had been commenced, with 196 having already been completed and closed within timescale. 199 assessments were open on 4th August, but this number reduced to 183 later in the same week (having peaked two weeks previously at 214).



3.15 Workforce

As of 14 August, the current vacancy gap is 19.5FTE against an establishment of 83. This figure includes pipeline leavers and pipeline starters. Presently there are 20 locum Social Workers and a peripatetic locum social work team consisting of 7 Social Workers.

The Social Work Careers website has been refreshed completely from the original Head and Heart Website. Included in this is a new strap line 'Make the difference – Give back the dream' this has been well received and has been incorporated into all of the external advertising for Heads of Service, Team Managers and Social Work staff.

Adverts have been placed in The Guardian Newspaper and Guardian Online for both Head of Service and Team Managers. From these adverts we have successfully recruited an experienced Team Manager to the Leaving Care Service which means that we now have a full complement of permanent Team Managers within Looked after Children and Leaving Care and the Interim Team Managers who are currently covering the posts will be released.

Further adverts will be placed in September in the Guardian Newspaper and Guardian Online for the other Team Manager posts we have vacant, being two in Family Support, three in First Response, one Conference and Review and another in Fostering.

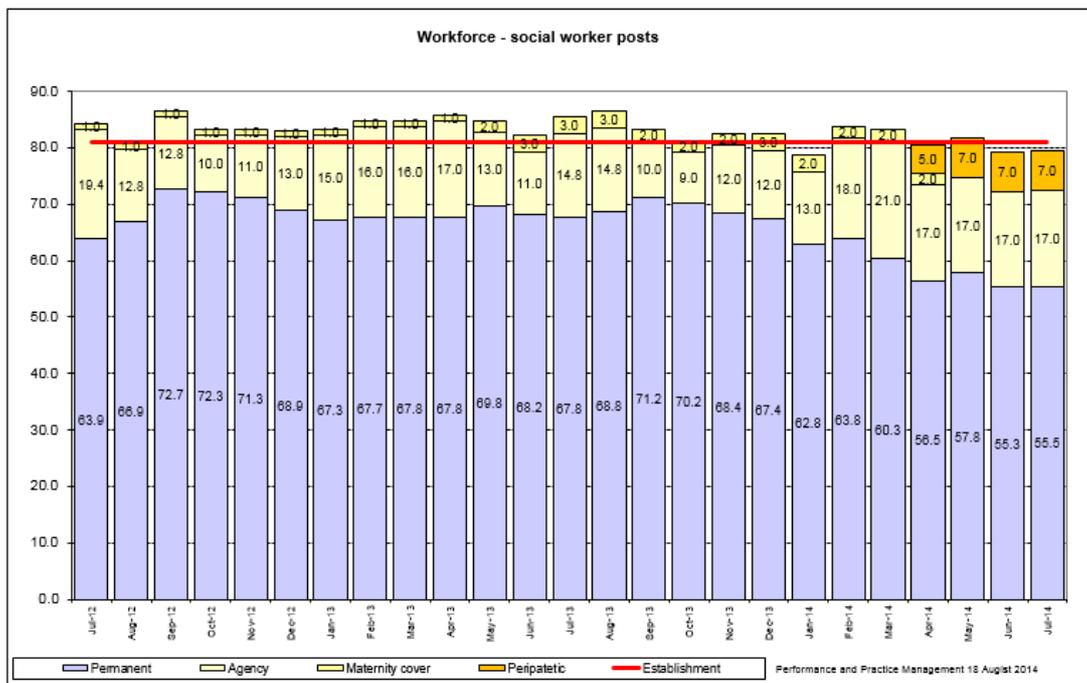
Interviews are currently taking place for vacant permanent Heads of Service posts, for which we have shortlisted five candidates. The Assistant Director post of Safeguarding will be advertised in September.

The new cohort of NQSWs has been recruited and they will begin their posts once their HCPC registrations are confirmed along with the necessary HR checks. When they take up their posts it will enable us to release agency staff and, as a result, reduce our costs.

As a matter of procedure, we conduct exit interviews for both permanent staff and agency staff. The information received from these interviews is of enormous benefit, as it tells the department how staff are feeling about working in Peterborough and what we are getting right and wrong.

The comments below are an example of the positive feedback we have received from leavers:

- Well supported in ASYE
- Good supervision
- Learning needs met
- Supportive team environment
- The staff here are very good
- Access to Senior Managers has been excellent
- Support from admin staff is excellent and better than anywhere else
- There are a lot of committed Team Managers
- Relationships between the teams is positive



3.16 Raising Quality of Practice / Getting to Good

Over the past two months practice developments have focussed on the development and implementation of practice tools to support assessments.

These developments are:

- Chronologies – all teams are currently receiving training in the new guidance and procedures for completion of chronologies
- Peterborough Practice Toolbox – a toolbox of approved tools for use by children’s social care workers has been implemented with staff being trained on the two new tools, the Genogram guide and the Risk and Safety Tool, in their team practice workshops during August 2014

A consultation exercise has been undertaken with parents of children in need and those subject to child protection procedures. This is summarised in the Quality Assurance report and has led to information being provided to social work practitioners about how best to support parents during social work interventions.

A revised Induction Handbook and checklist has been issued to managers for active use with all newly recruited staff, including agency staff. The new emphasis on induction is intended to support retention of staff.

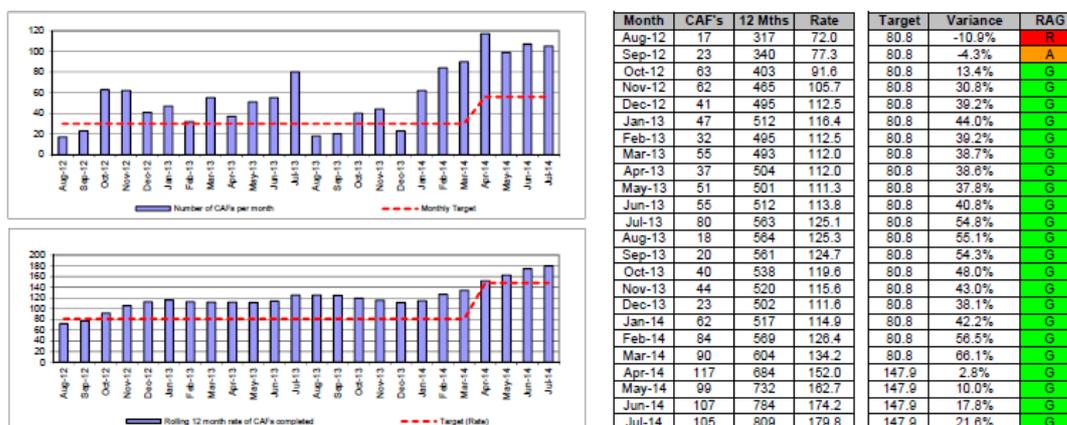
The recording policy has been refreshed and a new approach to open recording with families is being pioneered by a small group of Advanced Practitioners.

4. EARLY INTERVENTION & PREVENTION

The number of new Early Help [CAF] Assessments recorded as being initiated per 10,000 population has continued to increase as the latest data indicates:

CAFs per 10,000 - Rolling 12 Months Performance

July 2014



Traditionally there is a dip in numbers of new early help assessments in July and August because of school holidays. Continuing strong performance in this area indicates that more and more children and young people are being supported by integrated packages of support.

Building Community Capacity through the Community Safety Model

Building Community Capacity is one of the most often stated solutions in many of our high level strategies to the challenges in the city of a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse child population and a rapidly shrinking budget. The Community Safety model, being led by the Assistant Director for targeted services, is a concrete example of how we are beginning to develop such approaches.

The Community Safety model involves a number of partners in the city working together to develop a new model of prevention and early help approaches across the city, that are community facing and seek to provide support, while also building community resilience. The key partners currently involved in the model include:

- Peterborough City Council
- Cambridgeshire Police Service
- Cross Keys Homes [our largest social housing provider]
- Victim Support
- Peterborough mediation support
- Voluntary sector organisations through the PCVS