

Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 14Th March 2017

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Subject:

Updated Information for Members on the Workloads of Children's Social Care Services

Summary statement:

The report presents the most recent information on the workload of Children's Social Work Teams and updates Members on key pressures on the service. The workload analysis is based on activity up to 31st December 2016.

There have been a slight rise to the overall workloads of social workers, and pressures upon the service since the last report was presented. The report demonstrates that Social Work Services for Children & Young People in the District remain strong, robust and well managed.

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1 Summary

This report presents information on the workload of Children's Social Work Teams and updates Members on key pressures on the service. The workload analysis is based on activity up to 31st December 2016. Earlier reports presented to committee have confirmed strong, robust and well managed Social Work Services for Children & Young People in the District. Information within this report therefore examines any changes in workload and demand on resources since that date.

2 Background

- 2.1 Since Lord Laming's Report in 2003 into the death of Victoria Climbié there has been a clear expectation from Government for Elected Members to be routinely and regularly informed of the workloads for Children's Social Care Services. The Government requires that information as set out in this report be regularly presented to Members to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its statutory duties.
- 2.2 The second Laming Report (2009) set out wide ranging recommendations following the death of Peter Connelly ("Baby P"). The impact of this case and subsequent child deaths in Doncaster and Birmingham resulted in increased demand for social care services in Bradford and nationally.
- 2.3 The Laming Report acknowledged that across the country there were serious pressures and demands on social workers, with some case loads being unmanageable and thus potentially putting the safety and welfare of children at risk.
- 2.4 Lord Laming also made clear that practitioners, teams and individuals should all have a mixed case-load of both child protection and children in need work. No social worker should handle only the more complex and emotionally demanding child protection cases. This report provides information to elected members that this recommendation has been put into practice in Bradford.
- 2.5 The most recent inspection of services for children in need, looked after children and care leavers within Bradford was conducted by Ofsted in February/March 2014. The outcome of this inspection was broadly positive with a small number of areas requiring improvement.
- 2.6 Information provided in this report is produced from information held on the Social Care Records System (LCS). Internal and external audits confirm that elected members can have a high level of confidence in the accuracy of information produced for this report. Bradford has consistently received the highest level of data confidence scores for the Department for Education's annual Children in Need statutory data return. There are minor adjustments to historical values presented to Committee in previous reports, as a result of delayed data entry within LCS; where there are significant variations, these are noted within the body of the report.

3 Report issues

3.1 Workforce/Workload Issues

- 3.1.1 The first section of this report presents workforce and workload information for care management services. This includes Social Workers and Community Resource Workers in the Multi Agency Screening Team (MASH) , assessment teams, children young people and family teams, specialist teams working with children with complex health and disabilities, teams working with looked after young people and the statutory work of the Leaving Care Team. The workload analysis does not include agency staff except where stated.
- 3.1.2 There are 186 Social Workers (175 full time equivalents) in Children's Social Care directly employed by the Council. This is a reduction since December 2015 when there were 208. The significant change in number of social workers is due the change in how the service is now calculating staffing numbers. This will now be replicated in future reports. There are 44 Community Resource Workers (CRWs) or 40 FTEs.
- 3.1.3 At 31st December 2016 there were 10 agency Social Workers and no agency CRWs being utilised within the social work services. This is a reduction from December 2015 when there were 12 agency SWs and 1 agency CRW.

The length of time agency Social Workers have been in post is as follows:

1 - under 3 months
1 - 4 to 6 months
2 - 7 to 12 months
6 - over 12 months

- 3.1.3 Bradford has 46% of Social Workers (including agency workers) who are experienced social workers (previously called level 3 social workers) workers with high levels of experience and training. This percentage has dropped slightly over the past year, from 48% in December 2015.
- 3.1.4 The average caseload per full time equivalent (FTE) Social Worker is 16.1 cases, an increase from 12.7 in December 2015. Within the long term Social Work teams this figure rises to 17.6 cases per FTE (compared to 15.4 in December 2015). Social Workers take on a mixed caseload of child protection and children in need work. The average caseload per full time equivalent Community Resource Worker is 12.4 (a decrease from 12.6 at December 2015). The most recent published figures from the DfE (2014-15) showed a national average of 15 cases per FTE social worker and a regional average of 12 cases; the average across our statistical neighbours is 16 cases.
- 3.1.5 48% of looked after children cases are held by an Level experienced social worker. The average number of LAC cases held by each FTE worker is 6.6, rising to 14.5 cases for the dedicated Looked After Children Teams. This is an increase from December 2015 when the average number of cases held was 6.0 (14.1 in the LAC teams).

- 3.1.6 41% of cases where a child has a child protection plan are allocated to an experienced social worker, a figure which has risen from 35% in December 2015. Social Workers in the Children and Family Teams involved with Children with a Child Protection Plan hold on average 6.7 such cases, a similar figure to December 2015 when it was 5.5.
- 3.1.7 52% of public law proceedings cases are allocated to an experienced social worker, the same as in December 2015. The average number of Public Law cases per FTE Social Worker is 2.4, also the same as in December 2015.

(Refer to Appendix 1 – a) Workforce and b) Case Load analysis)

3.2 Child Protection

- 3.2.1 The overall trend in the numbers of children who are the subject of a child protection plan has been gradually rising over the last year, after a sharp fall between summer 2014 and May 2015; there were 535 at 31st December 2016 compared to 484 in December 2015.
The numbers of children who became the subject of a plan has seen a similar rise over the same period, with 609 plans starting in the year to December 2016 compared to 498 in the year to December 2015.
At the same time, there are falling numbers of children's plans ending, with 543 plans closed in the year to December 2016 compared to 570 in the year to December 2015.
- 3.2.2 The proportions of children subject to plans under each category at 31st December 2016 are: Physical abuse 7%; sexual abuse 8%; emotional abuse 49%; neglect 36%. These proportions are similar to in December 2015. Quality assurance through 'challenge panels' indicates that reasons for a child requiring a child protection plan are accurately and consistently recorded.
- 3.2.3 Relatively there are still fewer children subject to a plan in Bradford than nationally, The current rate of children subject to a child protection plan is 38.2 per 10,000 child population (at 31st December 2016) whereas the most recent published national rate is 43.1 per 10,000 and the regional average is 41.7 per 10,000 (at 31st March 2016).
- 3.2.4 During the year to 31st December 2016, 6.2% of children had become subject to a plan for a second time within 2 years, a deterioration compared to the previous year when it was 4.4%. Ofsted considers the percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time to be an important indication of the appropriateness of earlier interventions. A high rate is viewed as indicative of unsatisfactory outcomes to earlier plans.
- 3.2.5 The percentage of Child Protection Plans lasting for 2 years or more has improved over the last year, with 3.4% in the year to 31st December 2016; this compares to 3.7% in the year to 31st December 2015.
- 3.2.6 All children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan have an allocated Social Worker.

(Refer to Appendices 2.1 – 2.4)

3.2.7 As at 31st December 2016 there were 338 children and young people identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).

3.3 Looked After Children

3.3.1 The number of looked after children has seen a sharp rise in the last 12 months. The number of children being looked after is 928 at 31st December 2016 – higher than the figure of 861 in December 2015. This equates to 66 children being looked after per 10,000 child population; this is higher than the national rate of 60 per 10,000 but lower than our statistical neighbour average of 78 per 10,000 (at 31st March 2016) (appendix – 2.5).

3.3.2 Strong permanence arrangements are a contributing factor towards reducing the upward trend of LAC, alongside closely monitored care proceedings cases and discharges of care order. There were 43 adoptions and 37 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in the year to December 2016, compared to 74 adoptions and 41 SGOs in the year to 31st December 2015. This reduction in adoption and SGO's is a National issue following case law. 243 Looked After Children are in Family & Friends foster placements, more than the 200 in December 2015; there are ongoing Allowances being paid to families for 296 children on an SGO who were previously LAC.

3.3.3 The long term stability of Looked After Children has remained steady in the last year. 70.8% of children who had been looked after for two and a half years or more had been in the same placement for at least 2 years (compared to 70.9% the previous year). This is slightly better than the most recently published national average of 68% (March 2015).

3.3.4 All Looked After Children have an allocated worker; most have an experienced Social Worker. Currently 156 cases are allocated to Community Resource Workers, much of which is work with young people preparing for moves into independent living.

3.3.5 The number of children subject to Public Law Care Proceedings cases has risen over the past 12 months. At 31st December 2016 there were 135 cases in Public Law Care Proceedings (there were 131 at 31st December 2015). Public Law Outline (PLO) is applied when a decision is taken by the local authority that parenting cannot be improved within the child's timescale and that the threshold (of significant harm) for care proceedings has been met in principle. In these cases the local authority should determine whether to bring proceedings as quickly as possible or to give parents a further opportunity to make changes necessary to avoid proceedings being initiated.

3.4 Referrals and Assessments

3.4.1 The number of referrals received by Social Care Services has increased to about 520 per month over the last year, compared to about 420 per month for the year before.

3.4.2 The number of assessments being undertaken by Social Workers is also high. About

820 assessments are carried out each month (this includes assessments in the long term teams), indicating a continuing high volume of in depth assessment work being undertaken.

- 3.4.3 The breakdown of Factors of Need associated with assessments carried out in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 can be found in Appendix 2.7.

3.5 Children in Need

- 3.5.1 The total number of children being included within the CIN census in 2015-16 was 8518, compared to 8362 for the previous 12 months, indicating that an increased number of children are in contact with social care services compared to the previous year. There were 3931 children's cases open as at 31st December 2016.

3.6 The Ofsted Improvement Plan

- 3.6.1 The child protection and looked after service was inspected as part of a three year rolling programme by Ofsted in February and March 2014. The action appended at 4 sets out for the committee the improvement actions taken and progress to date.

4 Options

There are no options for consideration.

5 Contribution to Corporate Priorities

The work of Children's Social Care contributes to the Council priority of keeping children safe.

6 Recommendations

That the Committee consider further reports in the 2017-18 work programme to ensure the continuation of safe workloads and practice into the future given the current financial climate.

7 Background Documents

None.

8 Not for Publication Documents

None.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Workload & Caseload Analysis

Appendix 2 – Workload Pressures

Appendix 3 – Departmental Sickness Monitoring

Appendix 4 – Ofsted Inspection 2014 Improvement Plan

Appendix 1:

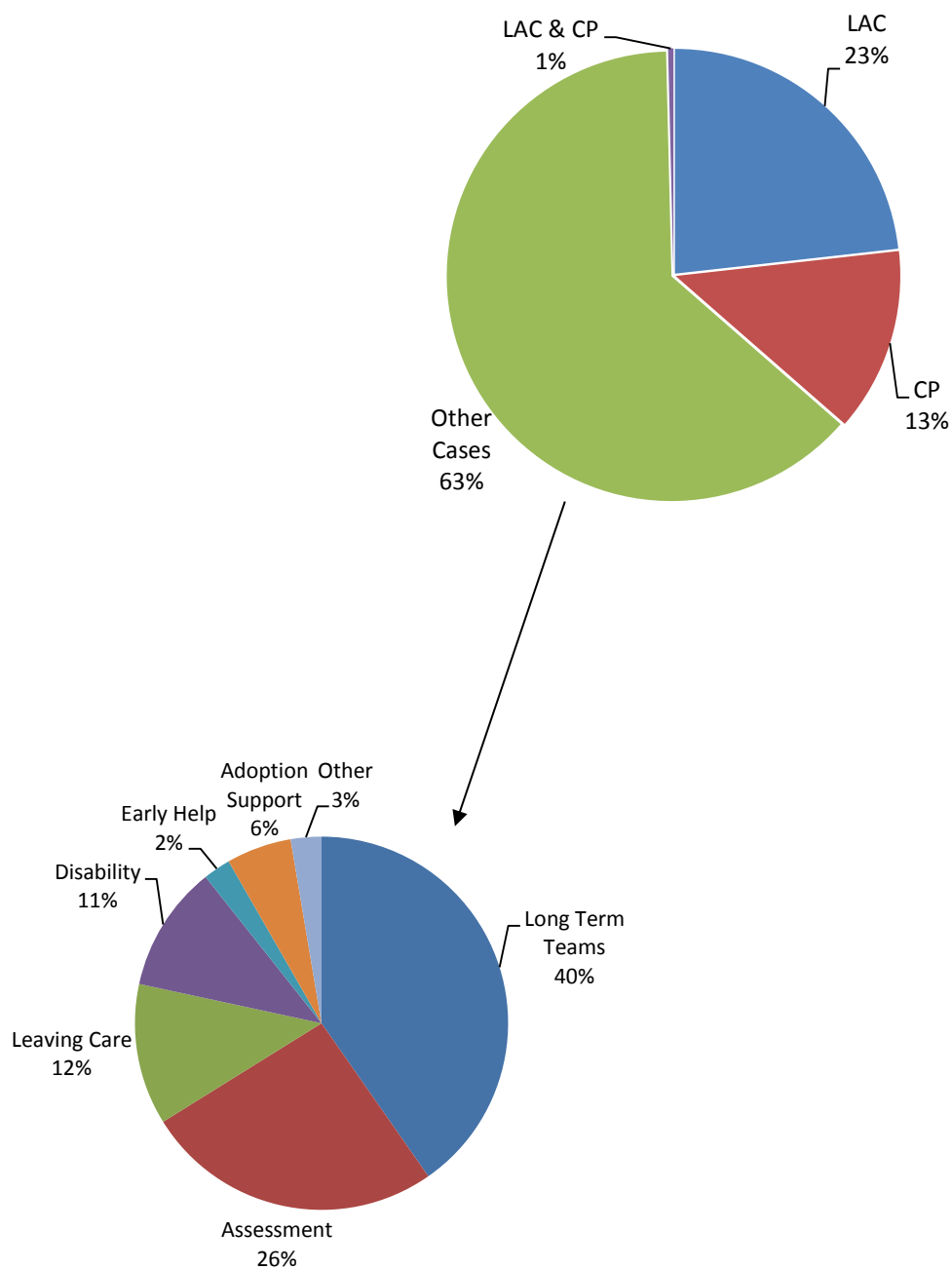
a) Workforce/Workload Analysis

		31st Dec 2015	31st Mar 2016	30th June 2016	30th Sept 2016	31st Dec 2016
Workforce Profile	Total number of directly employed Social Workers in post	208 193 FTEs	211 195 FTEs	190 176 FTEs	211 199 FTE's	186 175 FTE's
	Total number of directly employed experienced Social Workers	102 93 FTE's	102 92 FTE's	88 79 FTE's	89 80 FTE's	81 75 FTE's
	Agency Social Workers	6.2%	14 (6.7% of all SWs)	19 (9.7% of all SWs)	14 (6.6% of all SWs)	10 (5.4 of all SWs)
	Percentage of SWs who are at experienced Social Worker level (including agency)	48%	51%	50%	44%	46%
	Total number of directly employed Community Resource Workers (CRWs) in post	52 43 FTE's	49 44 FTE's	50 45 FTE's	54 49 FTE's	44 40 FTE's
	Agency CRWs	2.3%	1 (2.3 of all CRWs)	1 (2.2% of all CRWs)	1 (2.0% of all CRWs)	None
Workload	Average number of cases per FTE Social Worker	12.7 (15.4 in Long Term Teams)	12.9 (14.9 in Long Term Teams)	14.4 (17.1 in Long Term Teams)	13.8 (16.5 in Long Term Teams)	16.1 (17.6 in Long Term Teams)
	Average number of cases per FTE CRW	12.6	12.0	11.8	11.5	12.4
	Average number of LAC cases (including cases in proceedings) per FTE LAC case holding worker	6.0 (14.1 for LAC teams)	5.8 (13.19 for LAC teams)	6.5 (14.3 for LAC teams)	6.8 (15.0 for LAC teams)	6.6 (14.5 for LAC teams)
	Average number of CP cases per FTE CP case holding worker.	5.5	5.7	6.0	6.1	6.7
	Average number of cases in Public Law Care Proceedings per FTE PLCP case holding worker.	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.4
Utilisation of Resources	Percentage of LAC cases allocated to an experienced Social Worker.	50% (406 cases)	51% (410 cases)	50% (411 cases)	48% (428 cases)	48% (421 cases)
	Percentage of cases where a child has a Child Protection Plan allocated to an experienced Social Worker	35% (137 cases)	49% (213 cases)	56% (227 cases)	44% (182 cases)	41% (178 cases)
	Percentage of Public Law Proceedings cases allocated to an experienced Social Worker	52% (68 cases)	54% (63 cases)	62% (66 cases)	46% (73 cases)	52% (70 cases)

b) Caseload Analysis

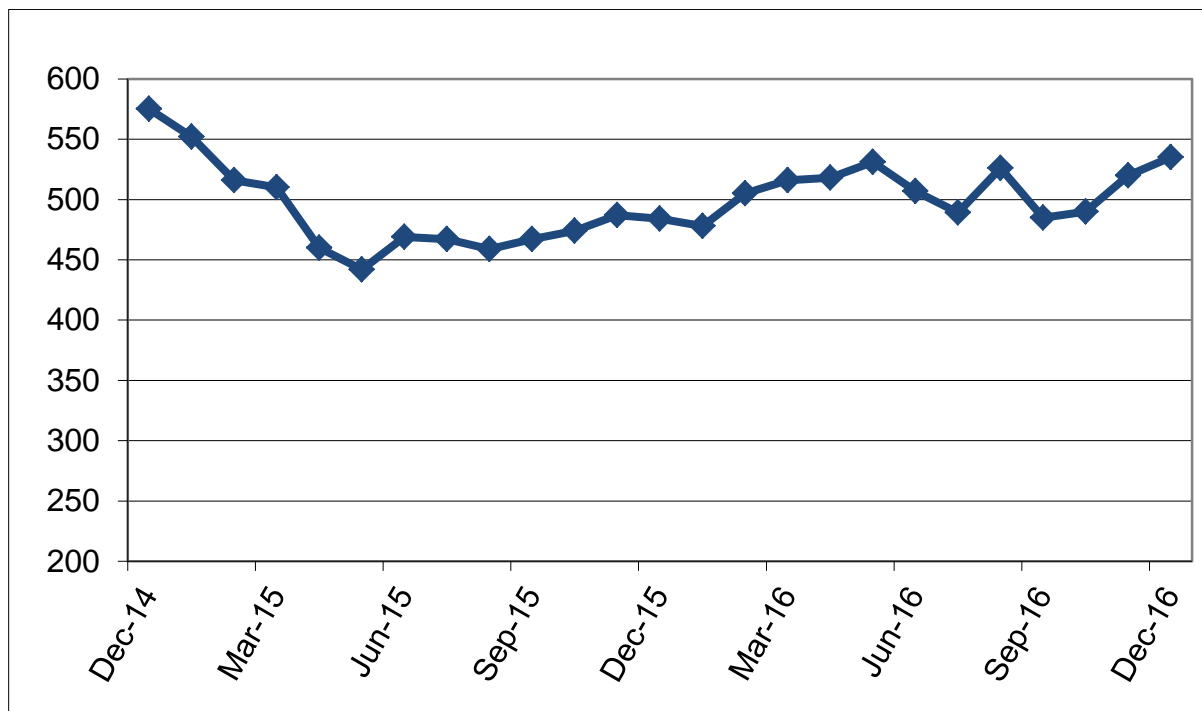
Active cases held by Social Workers and Community Resource Workers working in Care Management Teams at 31st December 2016.

Of the 3931 active cases held by Children's Social Care: 23% were looked after children (913), 13% were children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan (519) and 63% were other Children in Need, including cases still undergoing assessment. There were an additional 15 children who were Looked After and also the subject of a Child Protection Plan.



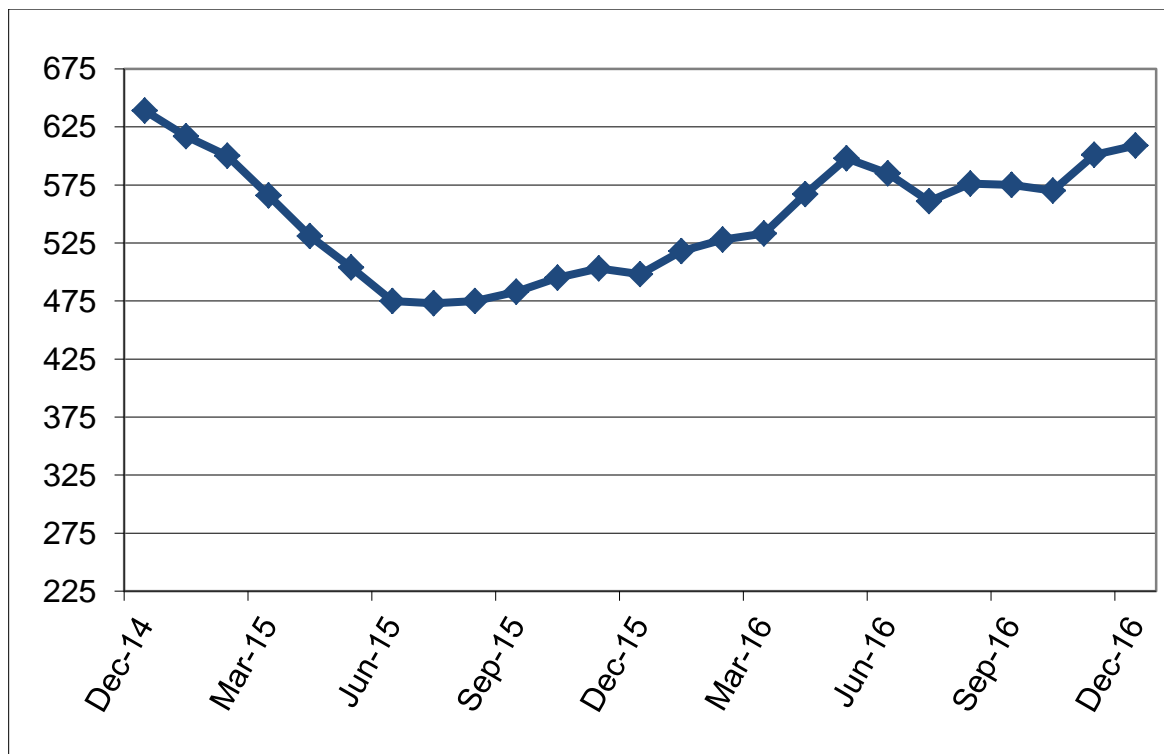
Appendix 2: Workload Pressures

2.1 - Total number of children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan (December 2014 to December 2016)



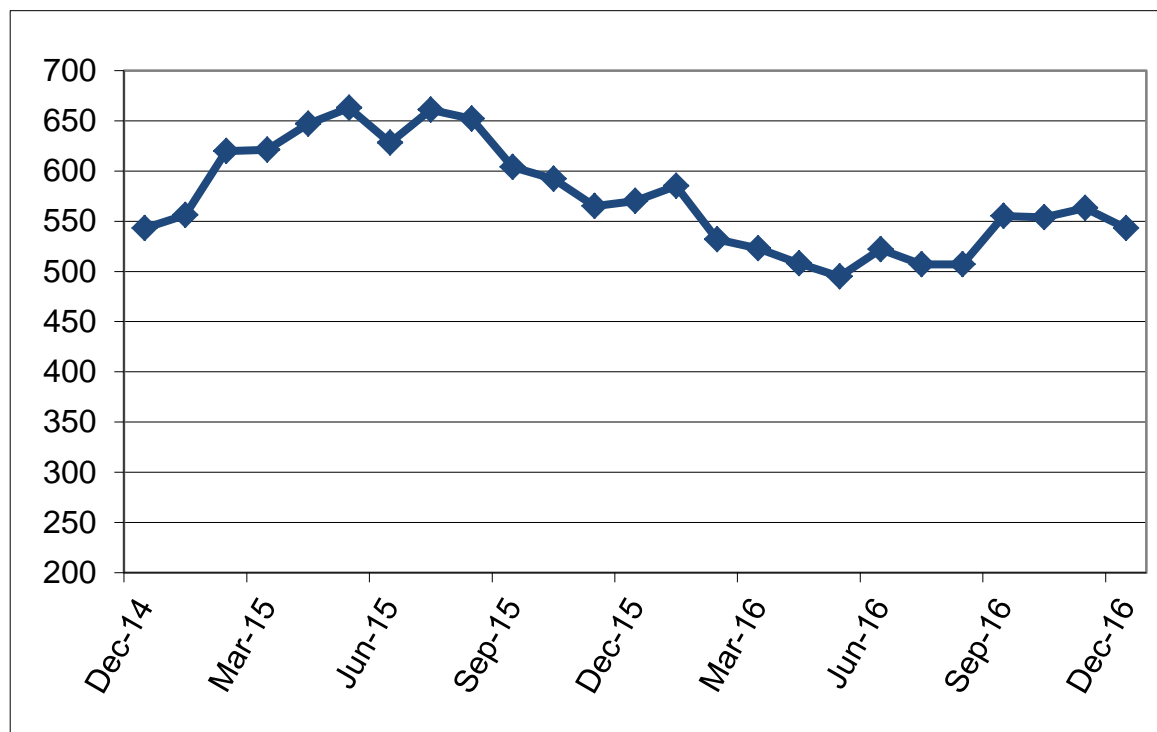
2.1 Total Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

2.2 – Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan (December 2014 to December 2016)



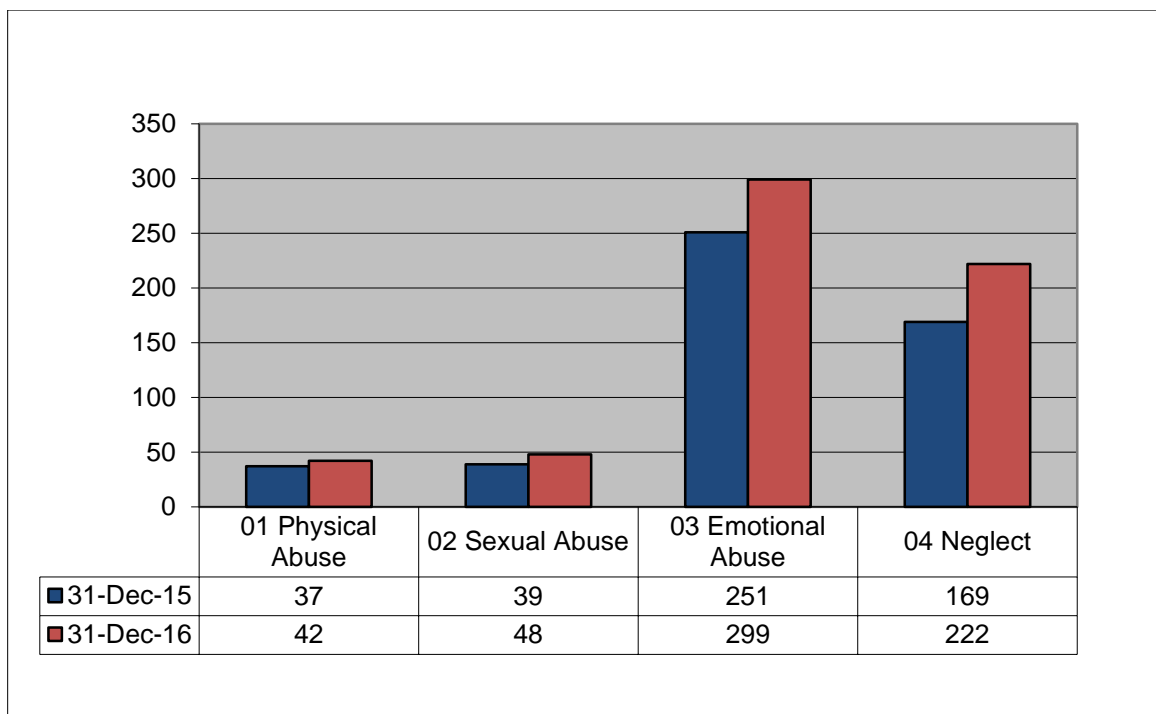
2.2 Children who became the subject of a Child Protection Plan

2.3 – Children ceasing to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan (December 2014 to December 2016)



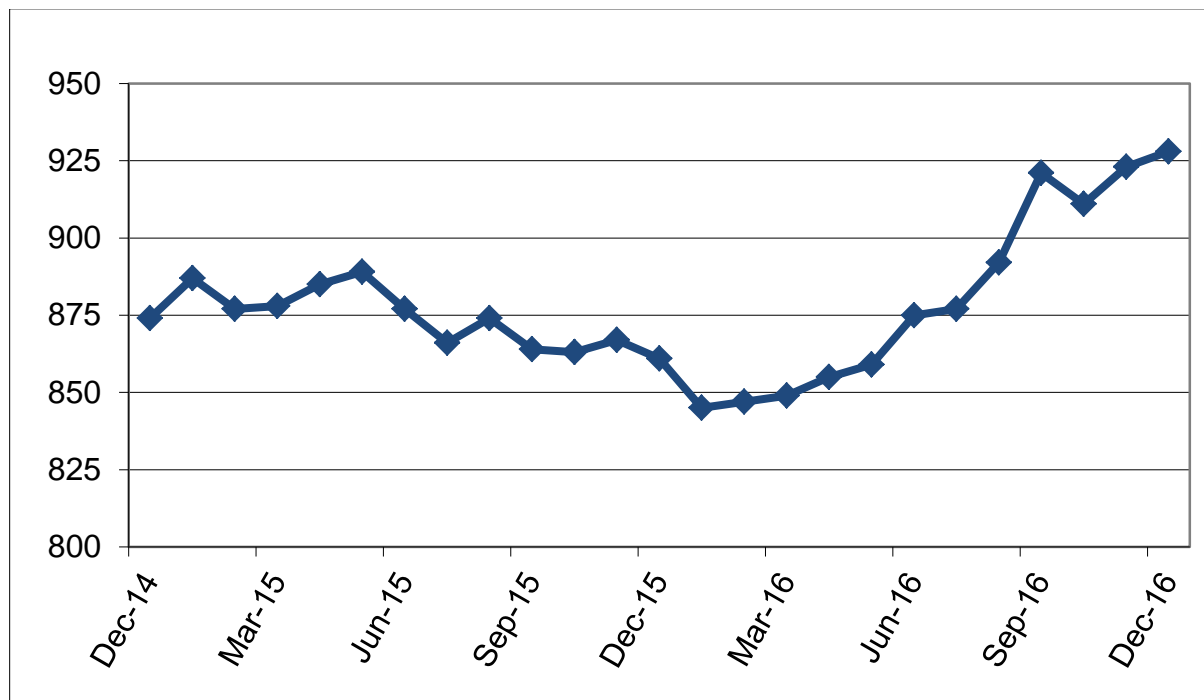
2.3 Children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan

2.4 – Number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the years ending 31st December 2015 and 2016 by category of abuse



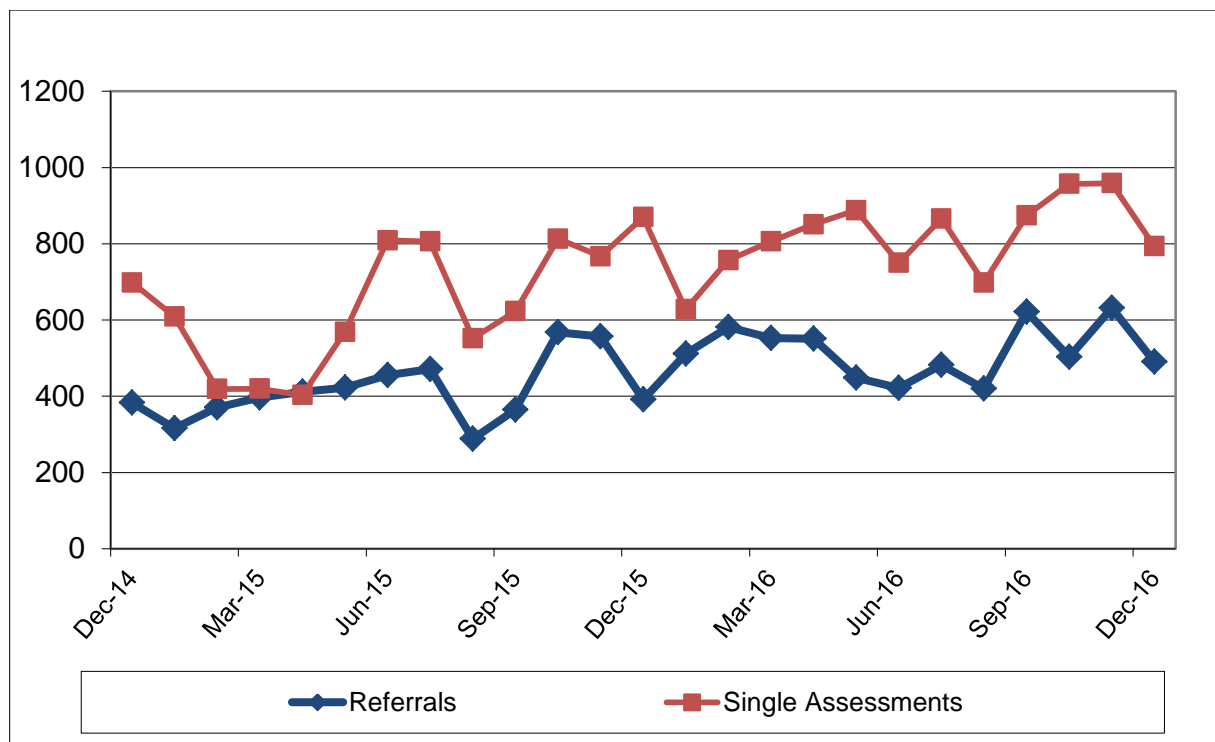
2.4 Children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan in the year, by category of abuse

2.5 – Number of Looked after Children (December 2014 to December 2016)



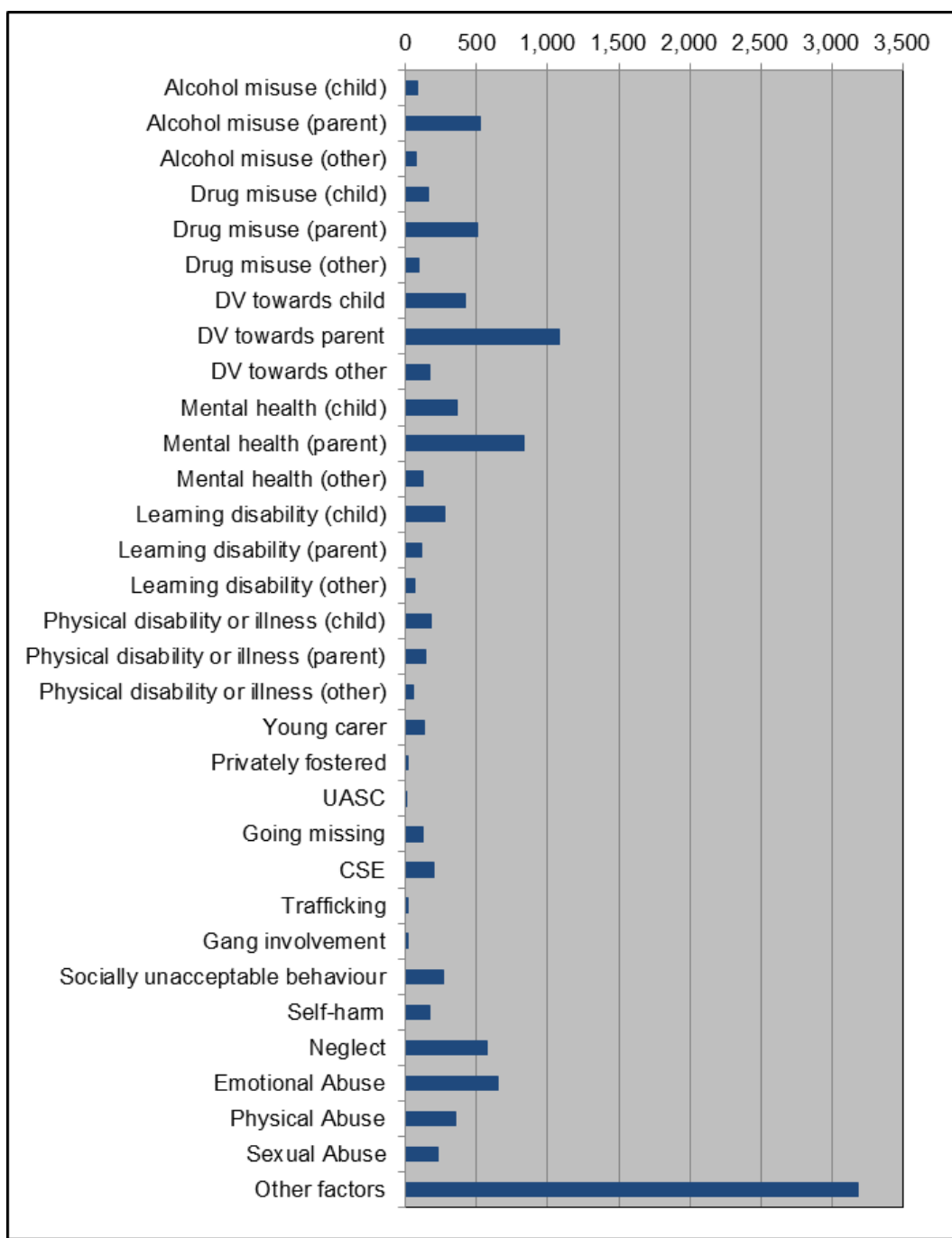
2.5 Number of Looked After Children

2.6 – Referral and Assessment Activity (December 2014 to December 2016)

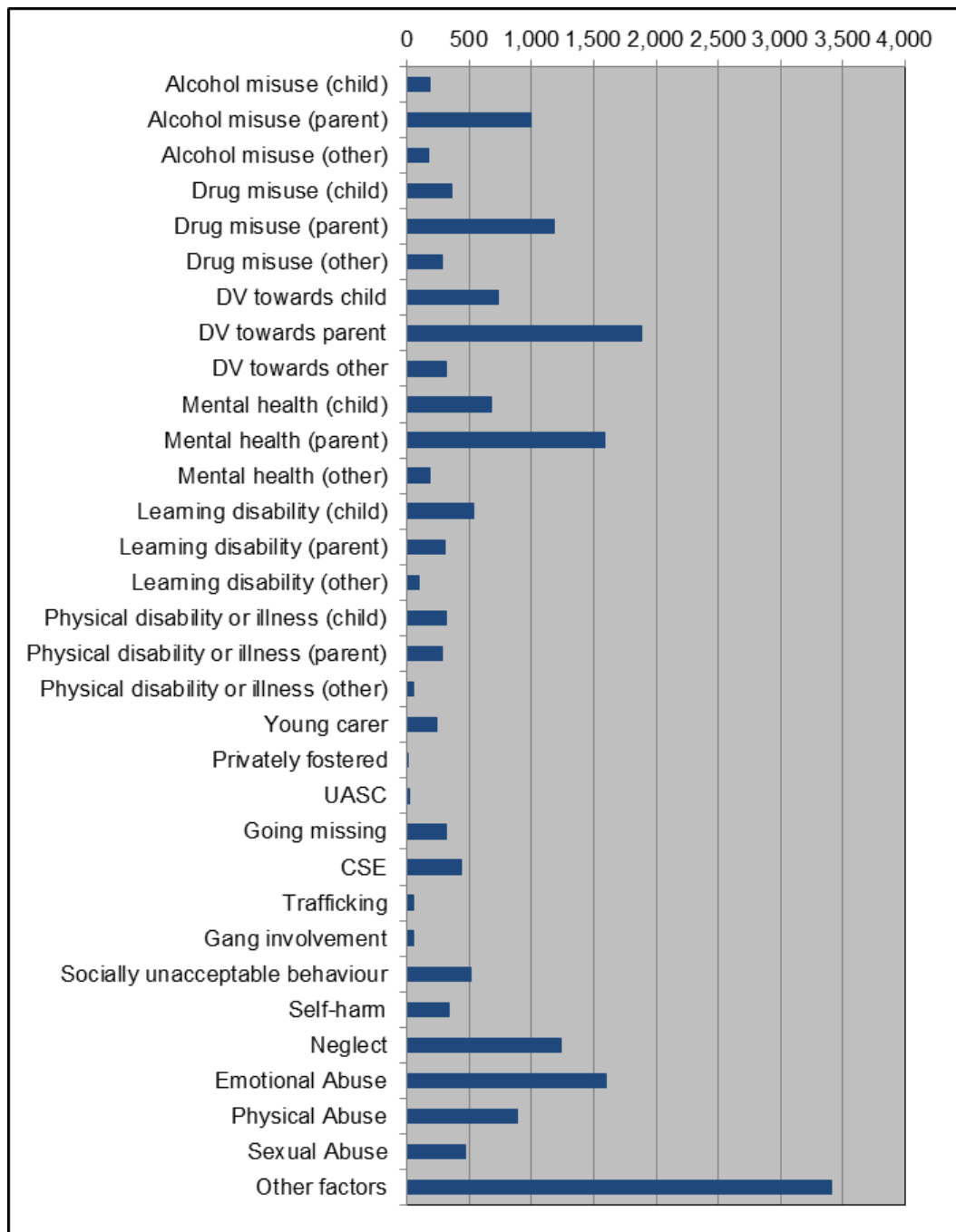


2.6 Numbers of Referrals received and Assessments completed each month

2.7 – Factors of Need Identified by Assessments (Financial Years 2014-15 and 2015-16)








2.7 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2015-16



2.7 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2015-16

Appendix 3:

3.1 Departmental Sickness Monitoring Report October-December 2016

Dept/ Service	Section	Sub-Section(s)	Number of staff by end of Dec 2015	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Oct 2015 - 31 Dec 2015	Number of staff by end of Dec 2016	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Oct 2016 - 31 Dec 2016	Performance compared with previous year Arrow up = improvement Arrow down = decline
Children's Specialist Services			859.92	5.36	751.93	5.37	
	Child Protection	Childrens Safeguarding Administration Reviewing Team	42.66	5.82	48.15	1.76	
	Targeted Early Help	Early Help District Early Help Clusters Families First Co- ordination Youth Offending	213.88	2.63	171.45	6.92	
	Group Service						
	Prevention/ Resources	Leaving Care Service Adoption & Fostering Children's Homes LAC and Leaving Care	557.59	6.05	390.94	4.63	
	Safeguarding Children's Board		4.30	8.11	3.30	1.19	
	Social Work Services	Disability Team & Family Centres Springfield Management Integrated Assessment Team Rooley Management Keighley Management Childrens Specialist Services	308.81	4.63	188.54	2.76	