

## **Report of the Deputy Director (Social Care) to the Meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

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**B**

**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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

There has 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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**Portfolio: Health and Wellbeing**

**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Children's Services**

## **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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. 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 187 Social Workers (175 full time equivalents) in Children’s Social Care directly employed by the Council. This is a reduction since March 2016 when there were 211. In December 2016 we changed the way we of calculate the number of social workers to exclude any with a zero caseload – this will include workers on maternity leave and long term sick leave. The decision was made because including workers who actually weren’t holding any cases was making the caseload average look lower than the true picture. There are 42 Community Resource Workers (CRWs) or 39 FTEs.
- 3.1.3 At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 there were 9 agency Social Workers and no agency CRWs being utilised within the social work services. The service has introduced tighter controls to reduce the number of agency social workers in the service. The length of time agency Social Workers have been in post is as follows:

0 - under 3 months
1 - 4 to 6 months
3 - 7 to 12 months
5 - over 12 months

- 3.1.4 Bradford has 46% of Social Workers (including agency workers) who are experienced social workers (previously called level 3 social workers) with high levels of experience and training. This percentage has dropped over the past year, from 51% in March 2016.
- 3.1.5 The average caseload per full time equivalent (FTE) Social Worker is 17.6 cases, an increase from 12.9 in March 2016. Within the long term Social Work teams this figure is 17.4 cases per FTE (compared to 14.9 in March 2016). 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 11.7 (similar to 12.0 at March 2016). The most recent published figures from the DfE (2015-16) showed a national average of 16.1 cases per FTE social worker and a regional average of 15.6 cases.
- 3.1.6 We have developed a caseload weighting system to support social workers and their managers, which arose as a recommendation from the Health Check for social workers completed in 2016. The Principal Social worker has supported this development which is being piloted across several teams currently.
- 3.1.7 50% of looked after children cases are held by an experienced social worker, defined as at least 2.5 years post qualified. The average number of LAC cases held by each FTE worker is 7.1, rising to 14.9 cases for the dedicated Looked After Children Teams. This

is an increase from March 2016 when the average number of cases held was 5.8 (13.9 in the LAC teams).

- 3.1.8 All cases of children with a child protection plan are held by a qualified social worker. 32% of cases where a child has a child protection plan are allocated to an experienced social worker, a figure which has fallen from 49% in March 2016. Social Workers in the Children and Family Teams involved with Children with a Child Protection Plan hold on average 6.9 such cases, a higher figure than in March 2016 when it was 5.7.
- 3.1.9 59% of Public Law proceedings cases are allocated to an experienced social worker, a slight increase on 54% in March 2016. The average number of Public Law cases per FTE Social Worker is 2.7, also higher than the March 2016 figure of 2.3.
- 3.1.9 In summary, there has been increasing demand across much of Social Care over the past 12 months. This includes an increase in referrals, assessments (data in 3.4) and an increase in the number of care proceedings. Applications to Court for an order in care proceedings increased in 2016/17 to 261 children in Bradford, compared to 205 children for the previous year 2015/2016. An analysis of children becoming Looked After in 2016 indicated that 1 in 6 were from Central and Eastern European (CEE) backgrounds. A snapshot of children becoming Looked After in February 2017 demonstrated that half were not born in Bradford (either newly arrived communities of families that had relocated to Bradford for a variety of reasons).

(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 568 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 compared to 516 in March 2016. The numbers of children who became the subject of a plan has seen a similar rise over the same period, with 657 plans starting in the year to March 2017 compared to 533 in the year to March 2016. The numbers of children's plans ending has now begun to rise after a long period of falling, with 600 plans closed in the year to March 2017 compared to 523 in the year to March 2016; however the numbers of plans ending remains significantly lower than numbers starting.
- 3.2.2 The proportions of children subject to plans under each category at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 are: Physical abuse 7%; sexual abuse 8%; emotional abuse 50%; neglect 35%. These proportions are similar to those in March 2016. Quality assurance through 'challenge panels' indicates that reasons for a child requiring a child protection plan are accurately and consistently recorded.
- 3.2.3 The numbers of children subject to child protection plans within Bradford is broadly similar to regional comparators and slightly lower than the national average. The current rate of children subject to a child protection plan is 40.6 per 10,000 child population (at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017) whereas the most recent published national rate is 43.1 per 10,000 and the regional average is 41.7 per 10,000 (at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016). The introduction of Signs of Safety approach which is becoming embedded within the service is supporting the better management of risk and more positive work with families in the child

protection process.

- 3.2.4 During the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, 7.0% of children had become subject to a plan for a second time within 2 years, a slight deterioration compared to the previous year when it was 6.4%. 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 has remained steady over the last year, with 3.4% in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017; this compares to 3.3% in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
- 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 there were 300 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 933 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 – higher than the figure of 849 in March 2016. This equates to 67 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 38 adoptions and 32 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in the year to March 2017, compared to 71 adoptions and 42 SGOs in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. 220 Looked After Children are in Family & Friends foster placements, more than the 201 in March 2016; there are ongoing Allowances being paid to families for 302 children on an SGO who were previously LAC.
- 3.3.3 There has been a sharp fall in our use of external residential care (see bed night calculator within Appendix 2). Between October 2016 and May 2017 use of external residential placements fell by 24% with internal residential increasing by 13%. As part of our strategy to reduce the use of expensive external residential provision and to ensure children are placed in family settings where possible we have increased our use of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) by 38% over the same period. This strategy is forecast to achieve a saving of 324K in the financial year 2017/18. Following revisions to recruitment of foster carers we have approved a further 24 fostering households in Bradford since April 2017 with 2 households ceasing to foster. We are currently assessing a further 15 households who have expressed an interest in fostering for Bradford. Internal fostering remains close to capacity. We are on target for our DfE innovation funded “B Positive Pathways” programme to go live in September. This will enhance our edge of care work with adolescents, support adolescents to exit care, and by equipping staff to provide a more therapeutic environment in our homes we hope to

reduce placement breakdowns. The innovation programme will also enable us to establish 2 “Mockingbird” hubs to support foster carers to work with children with more complex needs.

- 3.3.4 The long term stability of Looked After Children has remained steady in the last year. 69.9% 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 69.5% the previous year). This is slightly better than the most recently published national average of 68% (March 2015). LAC children are allocated to CRW’s according to risk, with only lower risk and children in stable arrangements being allocated. Although this was not an issue at our last OFSTED inspection, and was not an issue for York during their OFSTED inspection in June 2017, our learning from Serious Case Reviews means that we are incrementally reducing the cases held in their own right by experienced Community Resource Workers. Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, this will occur by natural wastage (to prevent disruption to established relationships). In other cases, we are allocating Social Workers with experienced Community Resource Workers continuing to have active involvement in the work. We hope to have all cases allocated to Social Workers by November.
- 3.3.5 All Looked After Children have an allocated worker; most have an experienced Social Worker. Currently 95 cases are allocated to Community Resource Workers, much of which is work with young people preparing for moves into independent living.
- 3.3.6 The number of children subject to Public Law Care Proceedings cases has risen over the past 12 months. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 there were 142 cases in Public Law Care Proceedings (there were 117 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016).

### **3.4 Referrals and Assessments**

- 3.4.1 The number of referrals received by Social Care Services has increased to about 540 per month over the last year, compared to about 460 per month for the year before.
- 3.4.2 The number of assessments being undertaken by Social Workers is also high. About 880 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 4065 children’s cases open as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

### **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 (Appendix 4) sets out for the Committee the improvement actions taken and progress to date.

### **3.7 Workforce Development**

- 3.7.1 Our social work recruitment takes place every month. The Principal Social Worker (PSW) is leading on this and has established a more streamlined process. We recently recruited 24 social workers with only 2 vacancies remaining. The next recruitment is targeted as experienced social workers to take place August. We still do have lots of interest to Bradford with the last recruitment having 59 applications. The PSW and Head of Social Work are working closely with workforce development colleagues on retention for experienced social worker initiatives, focused on manageable caseloads, regular good supervision and team support. We are also developing a leadership programme for team managers to support their professional development.
- 3.7.2 The PSW has also improved the induction process for newly appointed social workers who all now receive a comprehensive induction pack and induction programme. This has been well received by new starters. We also have good attendance at practitioner led forums to share knowledge across the service.
- 3.7.3 An issue arising from the Health Check for social workers was lack of IT equipment. 10 social workers have been issued with Samsung Tablets to pilot. This has been extremely positive and now agreement has been given to roll out a further 50 devices. Social workers are very excited about this as they believe it supports increased engagement with children and young people and also enables social workers to work more flexibly and saves time for other tasks.

### **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 "Better Health, Better Lives".

### **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:**

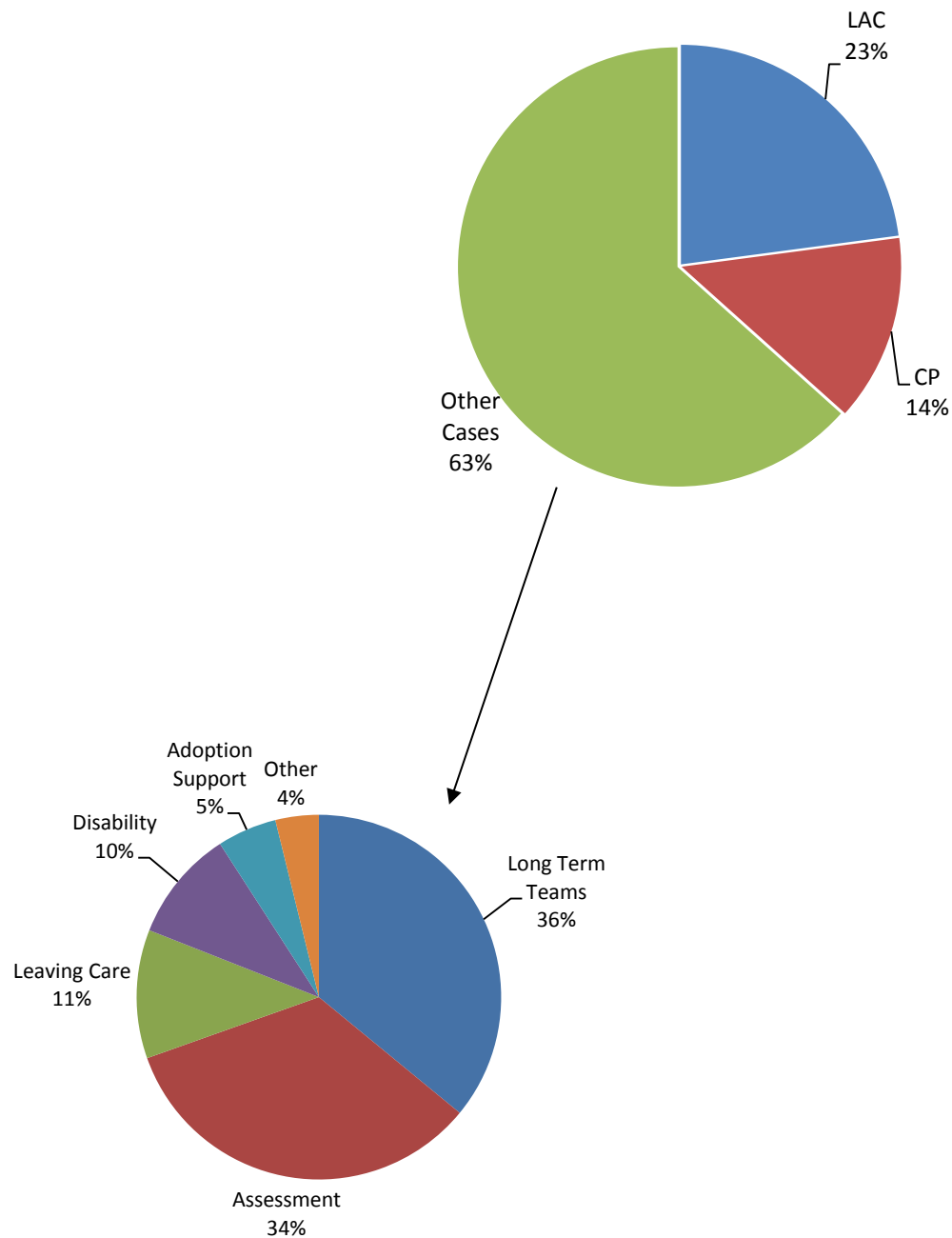
**a) Workforce/Workload Analysis**

		<b>31st Mar 2016</b>	<b>30th June 2016</b>	<b>30th Sept 2016</b>	<b>31st Dec 2016</b>	<b>31st Mar 2017</b>
<b>Workforce Profile</b>	Total number of directly employed Social Workers in post	211 195 FTEs	190 176 FTEs	211 199 FTEs	186 175 FTEs	187 175 FTEs
	Total number of directly employed Experienced (Level 3) Social Workers	102 92 FTEs	88 79 FTEs	89 80 FTEs	81 75 FTEs	82 76 FTEs
	Agency Social Workers	14 (6.7% of all SWs)	19 (9.7% of all SWs)	14 (6.6% of all SWs)	10 (5.4% of all SWs)	9 (4.9% of all SWs)
	Percentage of SWs who are at Experienced level (including agency)	51%	50%	44%	46%	46%
	Total number of directly employed Community Resource Workers (CRWs) in post	49 44 FTEs	50 45 FTEs	54 49 FTEs	44 40 FTEs	42 39 FTEs
	Agency CRWs	1 (2.3% of all CRWs)	1 (2.2% of all CRWs)	1 (2.0% of all CRWs)	None	None
<b>Workload</b>	Average number of cases per FTE Social Worker	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)	17.6 (17.4 in Long Term Teams)
	Average number of cases per FTE CRW	12.0	11.8	11.5	12.4	11.7
	Average number of LAC cases (including cases in proceedings) per FTE LAC case holding worker	5.8 (13.9 for LAC teams)	6.5 (14.3 for LAC teams)	6.8 (15.0 for LAC teams)	6.6 (14.5 for LAC teams)	7.0 (14.9 for LAC teams)
	Average number of CP cases per FTE CP case holding worker	5.7	6.0	6.1	6.7	6.9
	Average number of cases in Public Law Care Proceedings per FTE PLCP case holding worker	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.4	2.7
<b>Utilisation of Resources</b>	Percentage of LAC cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	51% (410 cases)	50% (411 cases)	48% (428 cases)	48% (421 cases)	50% (434 cases)
	Percentage of cases where a child has a Child Protection Plan allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	49% (213 cases)	56% (227 cases)	44% (182 cases)	41% (178 cases)	32% (162 cases)
	Percentage of Public Law Proceedings Cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	54% (63 cases)	62% (66 cases)	46% (73 cases)	52% (70 cases)	59% (84 cases)

## b) Caseload Analysis

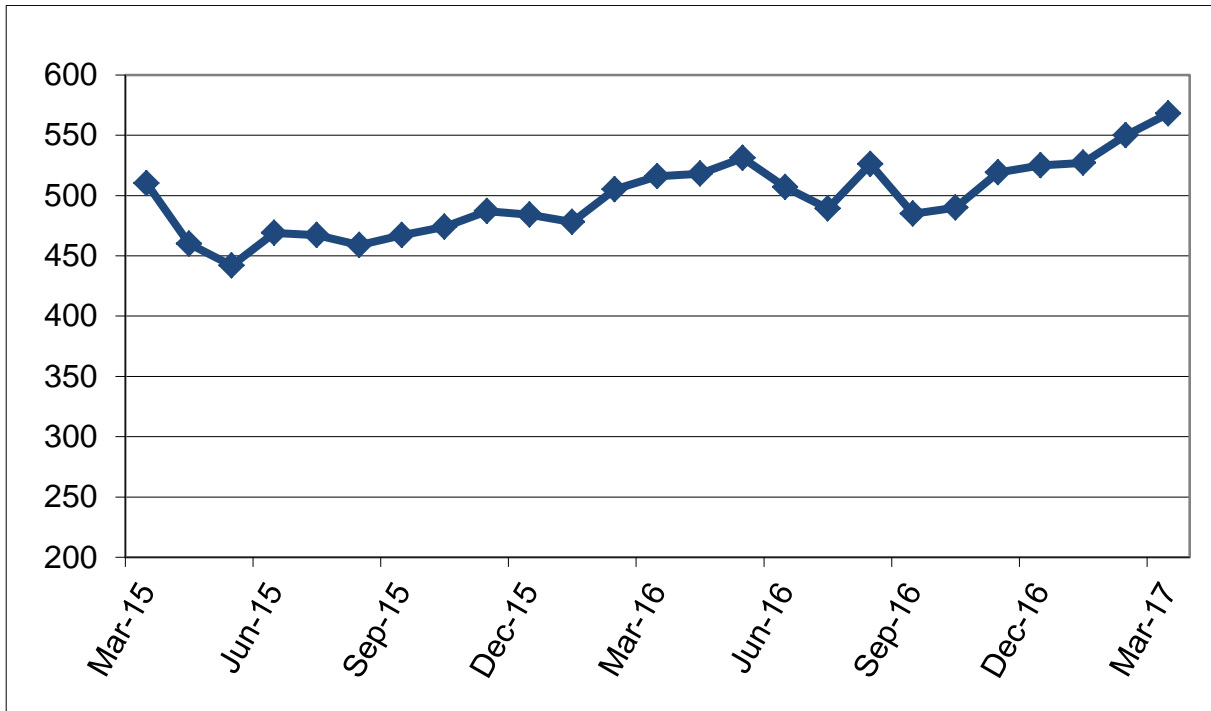
### Active cases held by Social Workers and Community Resource Workers working in Care Management Teams at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

Of the 4065 active cases held by Children's Social Care: 23% were looked after children (931), 14% were children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan (558) and 63% were other Children in Need, including cases still undergoing assessment.



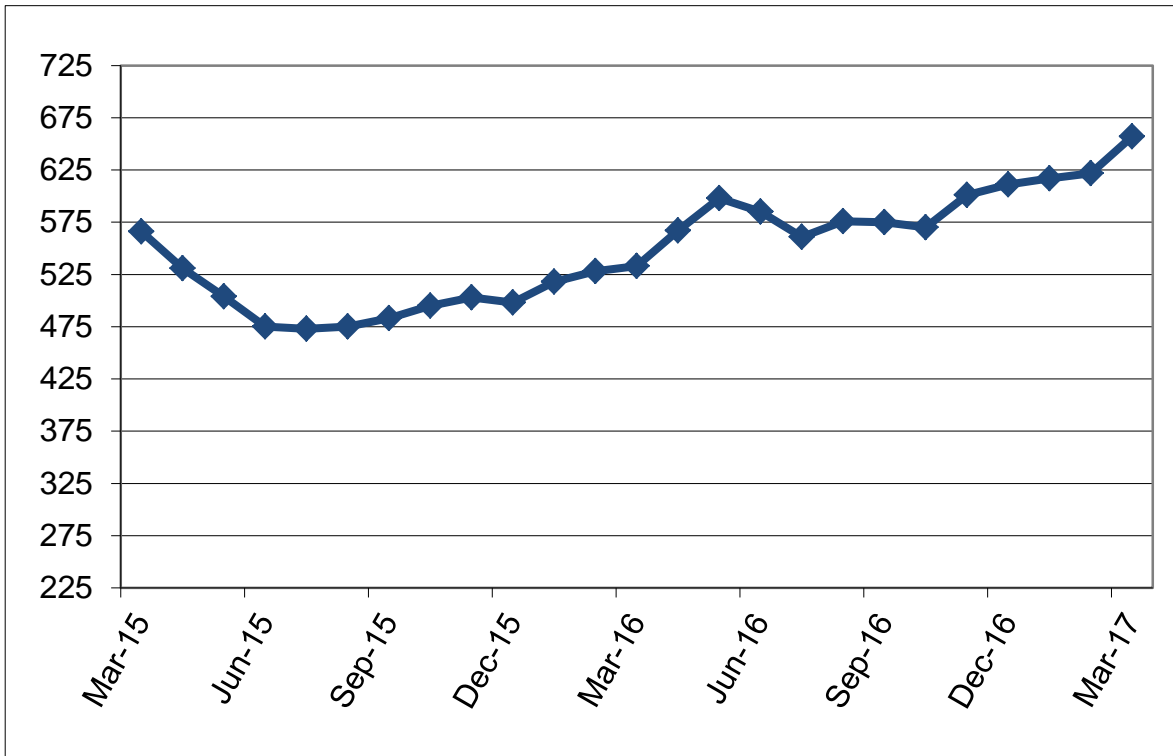
**Appendix 2: Workload Pressures**

**2.1 - Total number of children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan  
(March 2015 to March 2017)**



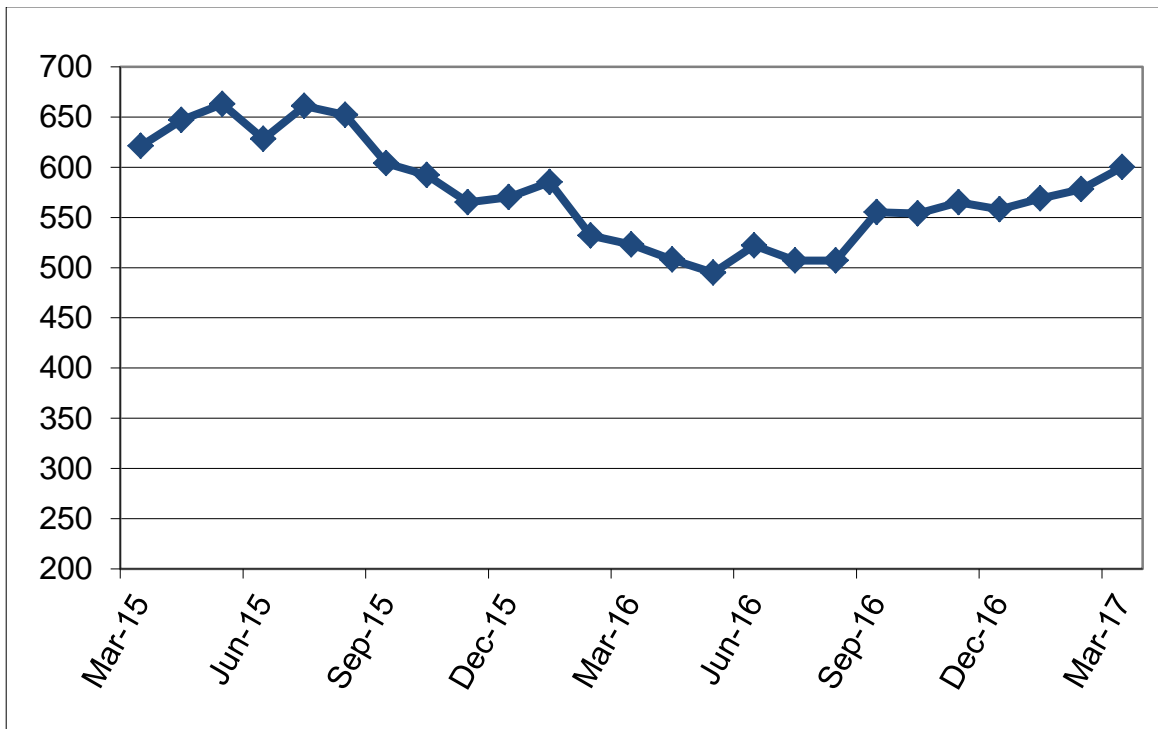
2.1 Total Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

**2.2 – Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan  
(March 2015 to March 2017)**



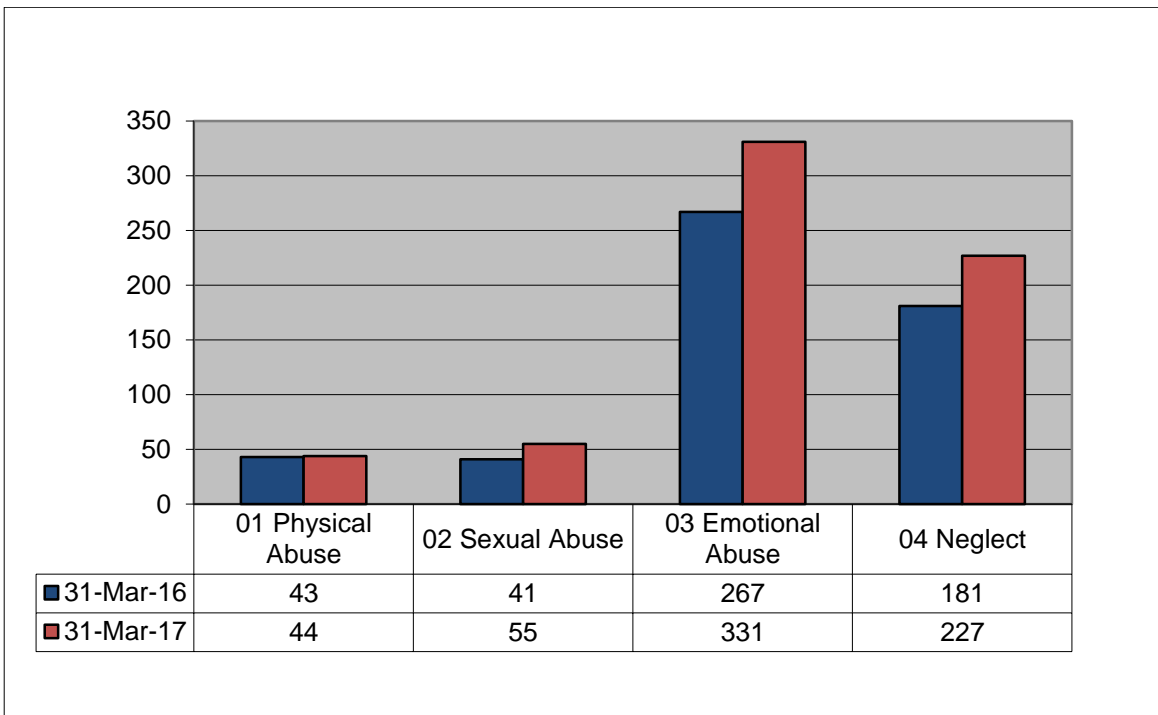
**2.2 Children who became the subject of a Child Protection Plan**

**2.3 – Children ceasing to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan (March 2015 to March 2017)**



2.3 Children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan

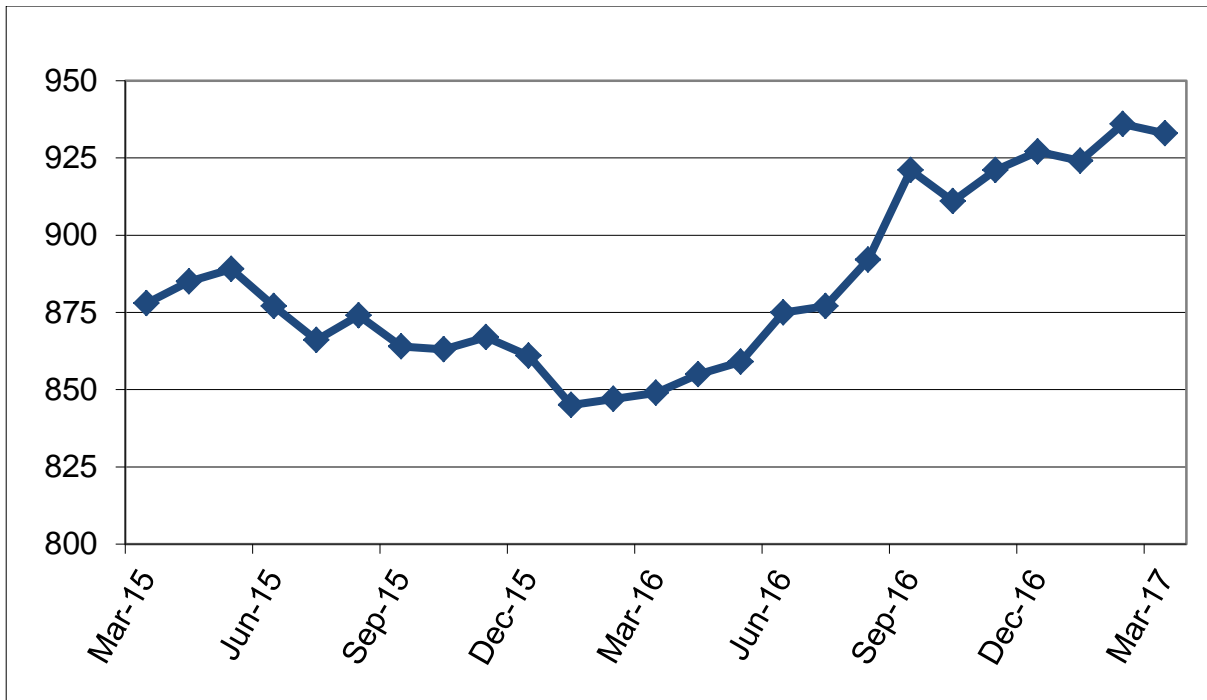
**2.4 – Number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the years ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and 2017 by category of abuse**



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

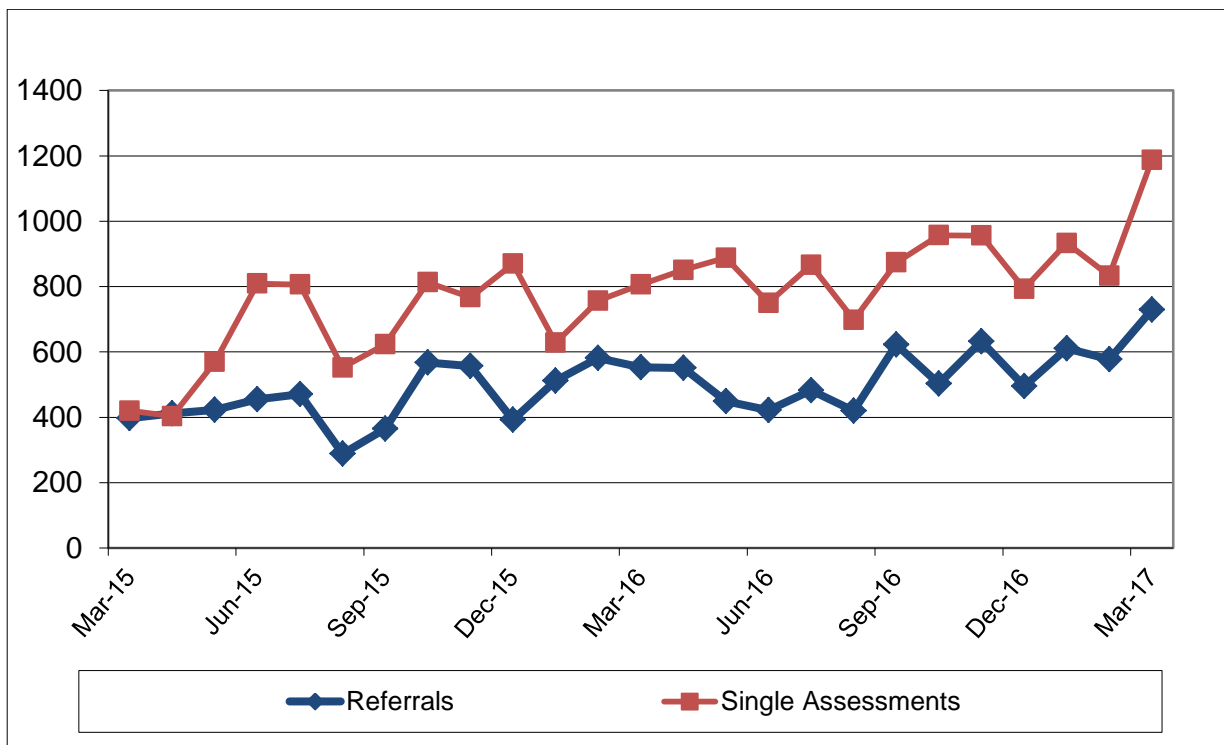
**2.5 – Number of Looked after Children**

**(March 2015 to March 2017)**



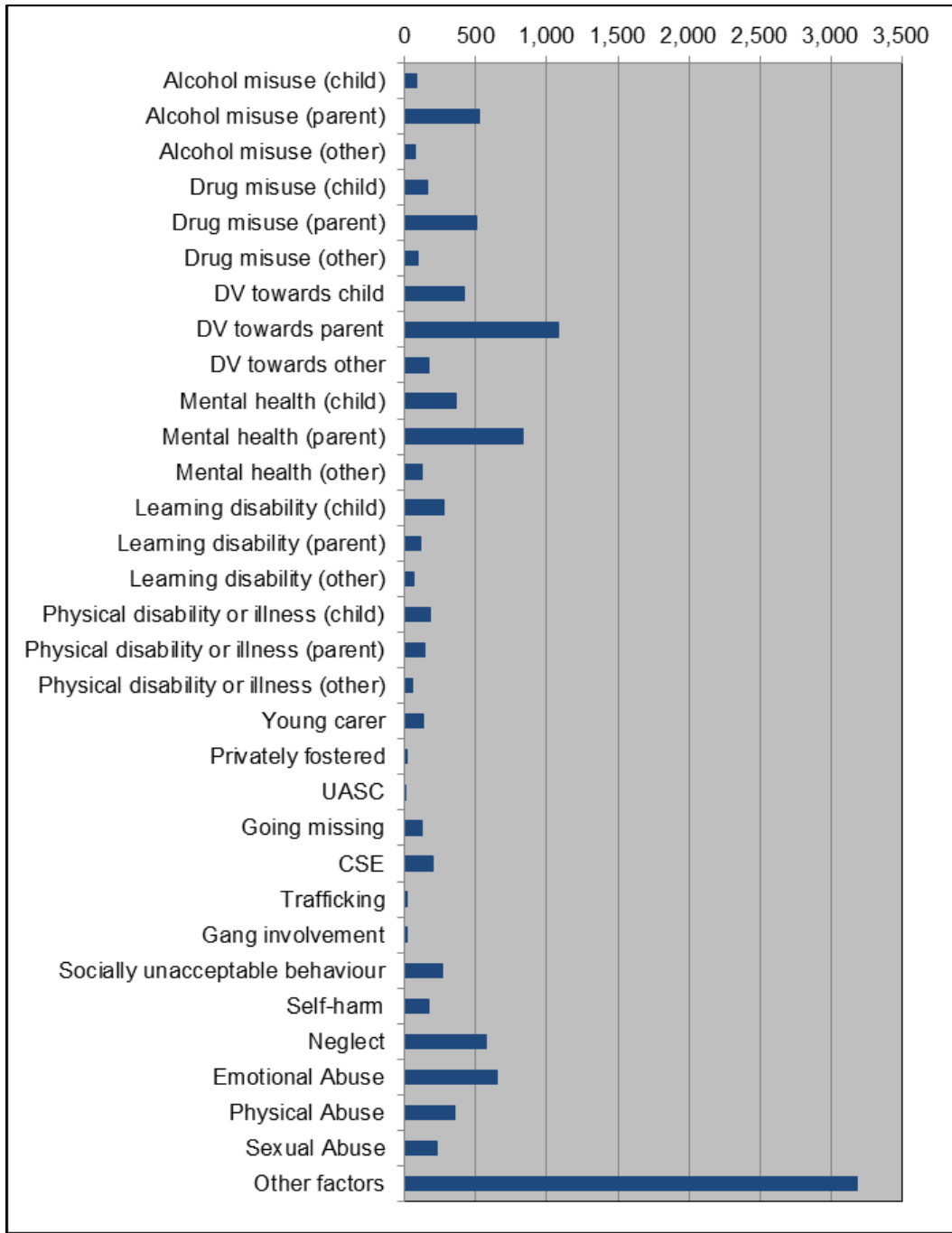
2.5 Number of Looked After Children

**2.6 – Referral and Assessment Activity  
(March 2015 to March 2017)**

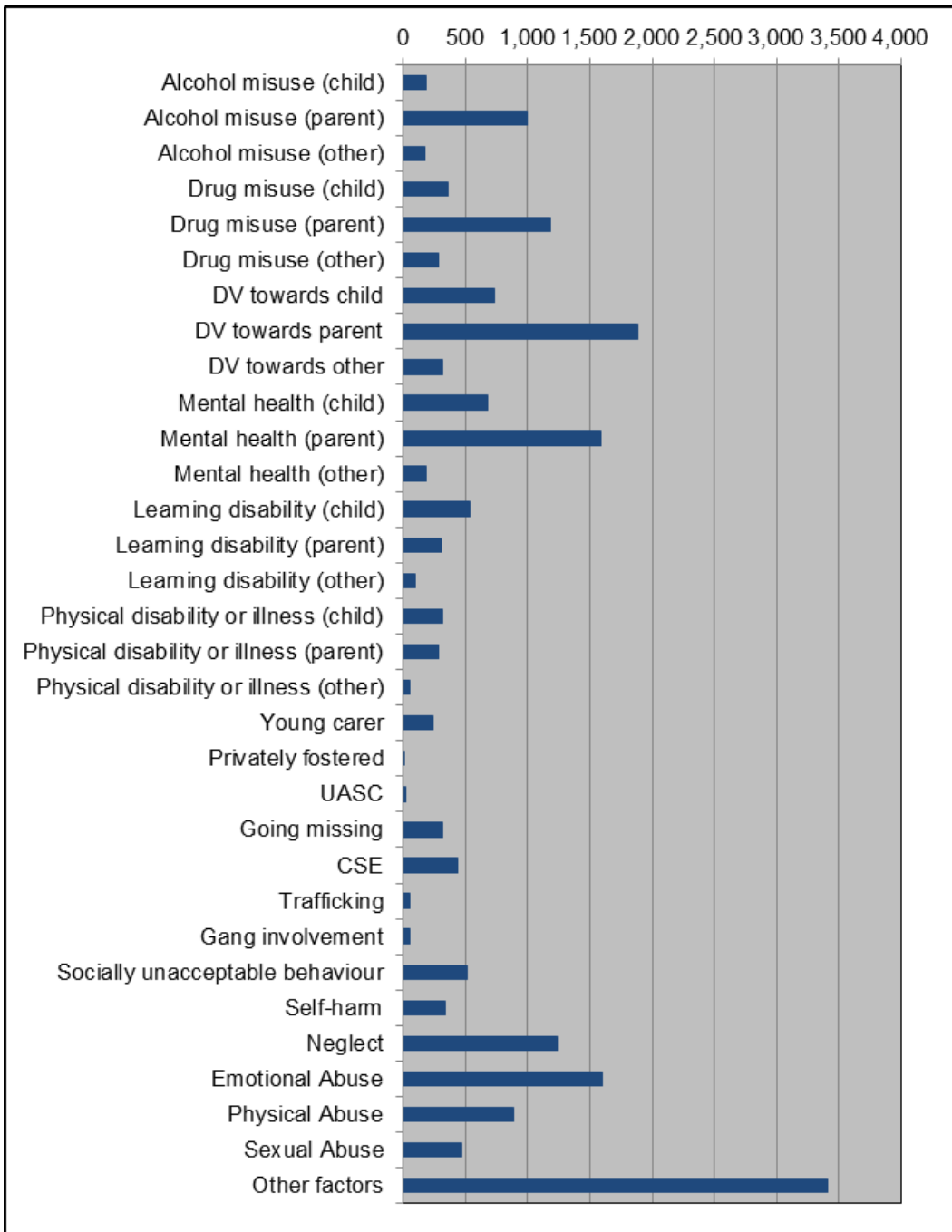


2.6 Numbers of Referrals received and Assessments completed each month

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



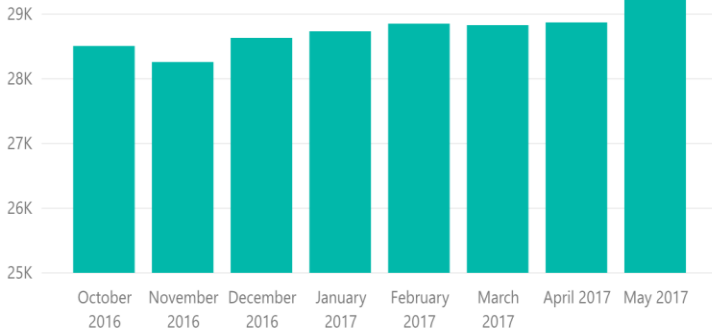
**2.7 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2015-16**



2.7 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2015-16



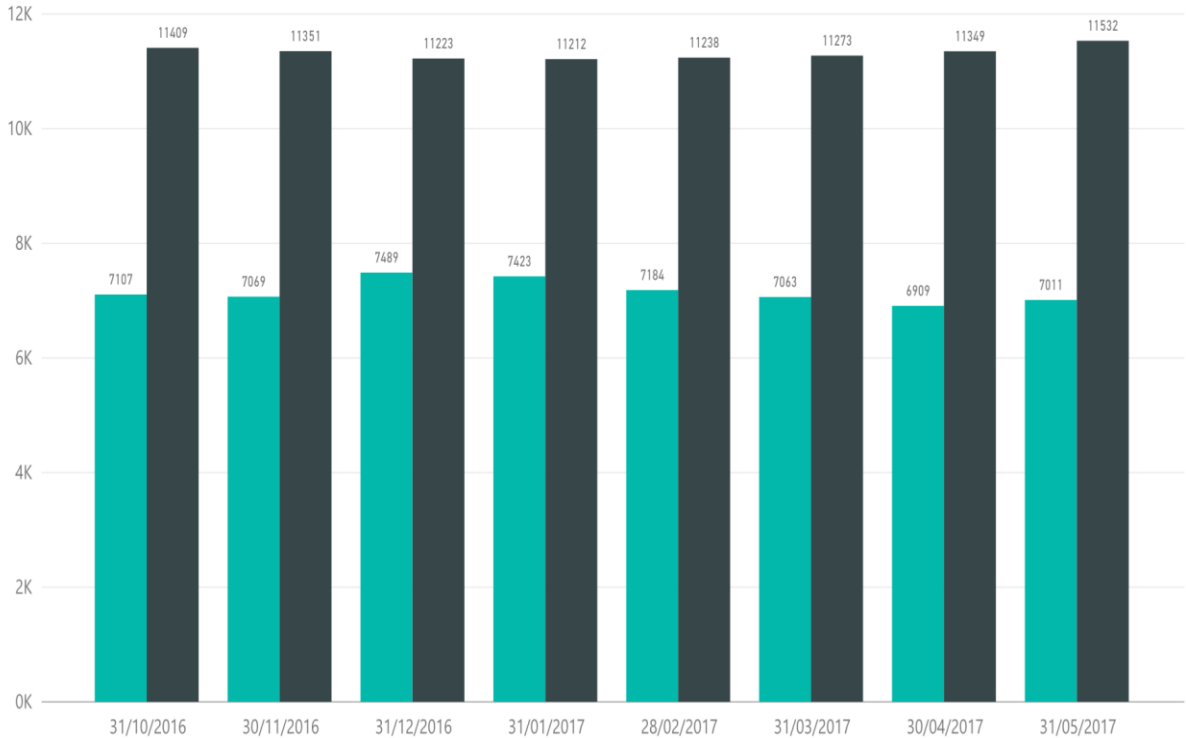
Total LAC Bed Nights per Month



October 2016	28508
November 2016	28260
December 2016	28633
January 2017	28735
February 2017	28853
March 2017	28830
April 2017	28872
May 2017	29317

Filters

LAC bed nights by month - Fostering in-house







Desc2 Fostering F&F Fostering In-house



### Appendix 3

### 3.1 Departmental Sickness Monitoring Report October-December 2016

Dept/ Service	Section	Sub-Section(s)	Number of staff by end of Mar 2016	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Jan 2016 - 31 Mar 2016	Number of staff by end of Mar 2017	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Jan 2017 - 31 Mar 2017	Performance compared with previous year Arrow up = improvement Arrow down = decline
<b>Children's Specialist Services</b>			848.85	3.92	808.48	4.83	
	<b>Child Protection</b>	Childrens Safeguarding Administration Reviewing Team	41.03	5.03	44.74	0.64	
	<b>Targeted Early Help</b>	Early Help District Early Help Clusters Families First Co- ordination Youth Offending	233.01	3.40	192.70	4.39	
	<b>Prevention/ Resources</b>	Leaving Care Service Adoption & Fostering Children's Homes LAC and Leaving Care	551.58	4.31	374.01	5.53	
	<b>Social Work Services</b>	Disability Team & Family Centres Springfield Management Integrated Assessment Team Rooley Management Keighley Management Childrens Specialist Services	310.92	3.36	215.53	4.31	