

Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 22nd November 2017

Subject:

N

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 30th September 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.

Report Contact: Di Drury,
Head of Service
Social Work
Cat Moss, Data Analytics & Intelligence Officer – OCX
E-mail: di.drury@bradford.gov.uk

Portfolio:
Education Employment and Skills

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 30th September 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. 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

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 Through 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 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 30th September 2017 there were 9 agency Social Workers and 1 agency CRW being utilised within the social work services. The length of time agency Social Workers have been in post is as follows:

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

Bradford has 44% 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 is the same as in September 2016. There is a concern that our turnover rate in children’s social care has increased over the last year and that we have lost more of our experienced staff. These staff have left for various reasons but some have left to go to other authorities with better pay and conditions for social workers. Children’s SW turnover for Sept 16 to Sept 17 works out at approx 17.7% (this is purely for Children’s employees with “social worker” in the post title).

The last turnover figures for comparison are (all July 16 to June 17):

- Children’s Dept as a whole is 15.1%
- Children’s Social Care is 13.5%
- the Council as a whole is 12.0%

3.1.4 The average caseload per full time equivalent (FTE) Social Worker is 17.9 cases, an increase from 13.8 in September 2016. Within the long term Social Work teams this figure is 19.5 cases per FTE (compared to 16.5 in September 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 12.2 (similar to 11.5 at September 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.

3.1.5 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 has been implemented across the social work teams to support managers and social workers.

- 3.1.6 53% of looked after child cases are held by an experienced social worker. The average number of LAC cases held by each FTE worker is 8.6, rising to 15.3 cases for the dedicated Through Care Teams. This is an increase from September 2016 when the average number of cases held was 6.8.
- 3.1.7 38% of cases where a child has a child protection plan are allocated to an experienced social worker, a figure which has fallen from 44% in September 2016. Social Workers in the Children and Family Teams involved with Children with a Child Protection Plan hold on average 7.3 such cases, a higher figure than in September 2016 when it was 6.1.
- 3.1.8 55% of Public Law proceedings cases are allocated to an experienced social worker, an increase from 46% in September 2016. The average number of Public Law cases per FTE Social Worker is 2.9, similar to the September 2016 figure of 2.8.
- 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 CEE backgrounds. A snapshot of children becoming Looked After in February 2017 demonstrated that half were not born in Bradford (either newly arrived communities or 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 rising over the last two years but has seen a fall in the last few months; there were 541 at 30th September 2017 compared to 568 at 31st March 2017 and 485 in September 2016. The numbers of children who became the subject of a plan has seen a similar pattern over the same period, with 634 plans starting in the year to September 2017 compared to 575 in the year to September 2016. The numbers of children's plans ending has been gradually rising, with 577 plans closed in the year to September 2017 compared to 555 in the year to September 2016.
- 3.2.2 The proportions of children subject to plans under each category at 30th September 2017 are: Physical abuse 10%; sexual abuse 6%; emotional abuse 51%; neglect 33%. The proportions are similar to those in September 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 38.3 per 10,000 child population (at 30th September 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 31st March 2016). The recent reduction in children being made subject to Child Protection plans may be attributable to 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. This will be carefully monitored in coming months but it is hoped that this trend will continue.

- 3.2.4 During the year to 30th September 2017, 7.6% 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 6.1%. 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 decreased slightly over the last year, with 3.0% in the year to 30th September 2017; this compares to 3.4% in the year to 30th September 2016. This low figure is positive and is evidence that the vast majority of children subject to Child Protection plans have their cases progressed and either stepped down to Child in Need or stepped up to legal processes as appropriate, without drift and delay.
- 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 30th September 2017 there were 299 children and young people identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE). This includes children assessed as low, medium and high risk. These children and young people are reviewed daily by our multi agency CSE Hub team and their risk assessments are regularly reviewed. The numbers change daily but at 26th October as a snap shot 34 young people were risk assessed at high risk of CSE, 101 at medium risk and 141 at low risk. All high and medium risk cases have a qualified allocated social worker and input from the CSE Hub.

3.3 Looked After Children

- 3.3.1 The number of looked after children has seen a sharp rise in the last 18 months. The number of children being looked after is 958 at 30th September 2017 – higher than the figure of 921 in September 2016. This equates to 67.9 children being looked after per 10,000 child population; this is higher than the national rate of 62 per 10,000 but lower than our statistical neighbour average of 82 per 10,000 (at 31st March 2017) (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 25 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in the year to September 2017, compared to 49 adoptions and 38 SGOs in the year to September 2016. 235 Looked After Children are in Family &

Friends foster placements, slightly more than the 228 in September 2016; there are ongoing Allowances being paid to families for 307 children on an SGO who were previously Looked After.

- 3.3.3 The long term stability of Looked After Children has remained steady in the last year. 70.5% 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 71.7% the previous year). This is slightly better than the most recently published national average of 68% (March 2016).
- 3.3.4 There has been a sharp fall in our use of external residential care. Between October 2016 and September 2017 use of external residential placements fell by 19% with internal residential reducing by 9%. The reduction in internal residential is a direct result of closing one home whilst we await the opening of a new home later in the year. This is all 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 IFAs by 49% over the same period. This strategy is forecast to achieve a saving of 256K in the financial year 2017/18. There are currently two young people placed in a secure setting this has a weekly cost of 12K, at this time this is the right setting for these two young people.
- 3.3.5 The recruitment and assessment process in Bradford has been changed significantly as a result we have approved a further 48 fostering households in Bradford since April 2017 with 2 households ceasing to foster. We are currently assessing a further 23 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 later in the year. The launch event on the 2nd November is being attended by MP Robert Goodwill Children’s Minister. 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. Work to develop the hubs are at an advanced level with recruitment to all the relevant posts underway.
- 3.3.6 All Looked After Children have an allocated worker; most have an experienced Social Worker. Currently 44 cases are allocated to Community Resource Workers, much of which is work within the Through Care team with young people preparing for moves into independent living. By November all cases will be allocated to a Social Worker.
- 3.3.7 The number of children subject to Public Law Care Proceedings cases has risen slightly over the past 12 months. At 30th September 2017 there were 166 cases in Public Law Care Proceedings (there were 159 at 30th September 2016). This corresponds to a similar rise in care proceedings applications regionally and nationally over the same period.
- 3.3.8 The Through Care After Care service has restructured to 8 teams. Each team will carry an area of specialism for example health, housing, education, participation and unaccompanied asylum seekers. The intention is that each team will carry a

caseload of young people from first becoming CLA through to young people of leaving care age and post care. This team and hub approach to working strengthens the support to young people and broadens the teams knowledge as a whole.

- 3.3.9 The arrangements to respond to missing children in Bradford is seen as best practice, there is a dedicated missing coordinator and Police officer, both work to ensure that appropriate reporting strategies are in place and there a strong links with the multi agency safeguarding hub. Return to home interviews are followed up for all young people and regular meetings take place with the managers of both internal and external children's homes to ensure hat the local procedures are being followed. A full report on missing is coming to O&S later in the year.
- 3.3.10 The local restorative protocol between Children's Specialist Service / Youth Offending Team and West Yorkshire Police has been reviewed and will be rolled out to service during November. This has been changed to reflect the B Positive Pathways model and the Police officers that have been recruited and their role. A ten point plan is included to ensure that all cases of a child looked after being involved with the Police has been followed before Police are contacted. The protocol gives clear advice to carers as to what they need to do should a child's behaviour warrant a call to the Police.
- 3.3.11 The number of children subject to Public Law Care Proceedings cases has risen slightly over the past 12 months. At 30th September 2017 there were 166 cases in Public Law Care Proceedings (there were 159 at 30th September 2016). This corresponds to a similar rise in care proceedings applications regionally and nationally over the same period.

3.4 Referrals and Assessments

- 3.4.1 The number of referrals received by Social Care Services has increased to about 560 per month over the last year, compared to about 510 per month for the year before.
- 3.4.2 The number of assessments being undertaken by Social Workers is also high. About 920 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 2015-16 and 2016-17 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 2016-17 was 9338, compared to 8518 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 4084 children's cases open as at 30th September 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) 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. Between September 2016 and August 2017 we have had 53 qualified social workers leave the service and 75 social workers have started in post. Of the new starters, 60 have been Newly Qualified Social Workers (in their first year in practice) 11 have been experienced, level 3 social workers (at least 2.5 years of experience and 4 have been level 2 social workers (between 1 year and 2.5 years experience). There remains a challenge to recruit more experienced social work staff and we are working on initiatives to improve staff retention, which include ensuring manageable caseloads, regular good supervision and team support. A working group of elected members and officers has been set up by the Portfolio Holder to look at retention issues across the service. 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. The initial pilot of tablet computers for social workers has gone well and we are now rolling out 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. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

5. OPTIONS

There are no options for consideration.

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. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Workload & Caseload Analysis

Appendix 2 – Workload Pressures
Appendix 3 – Departmental Sickness Monitoring
Appendix 4 – Ofsted Inspection 2014 Improvement Plan

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

Appendix 1:

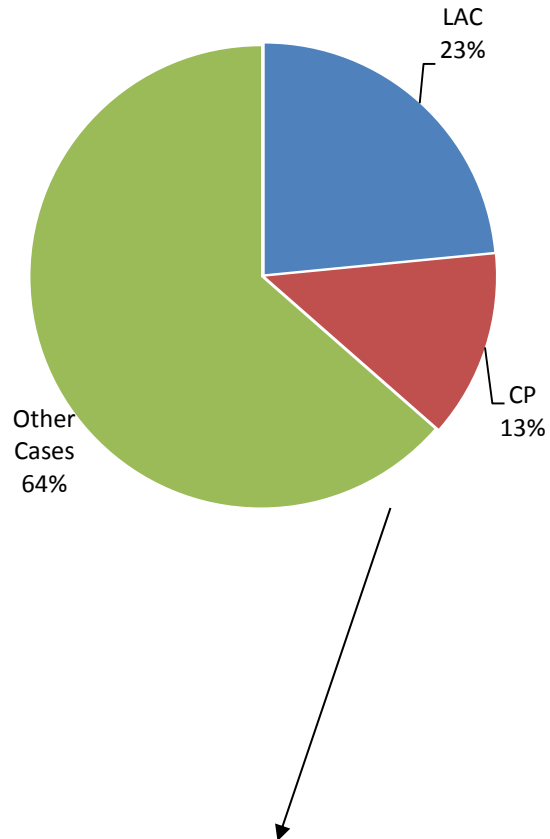
a) Workforce/Workload Analysis

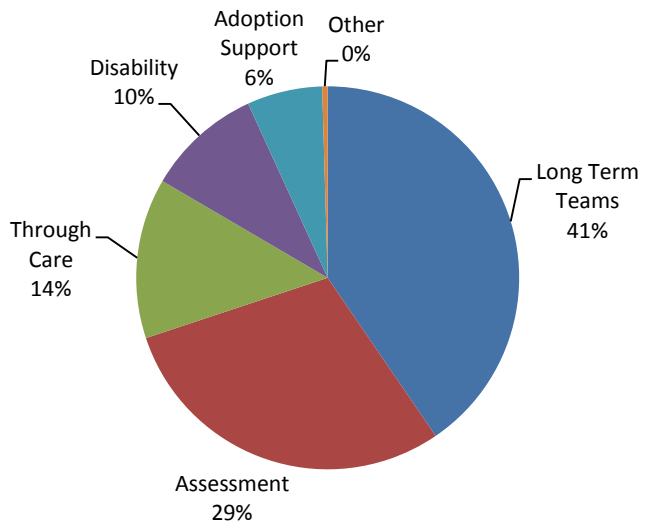
		30th Sept 2016	31st Dec 2016	31st Mar 2017	30th June 2017	30th Sept 2017
Workforce Profile	Total number of directly employed Social Workers in post	211 199 FTEs	186 175 FTEs	187 175 FTEs	189 178 FTEs	182 170 FTEs
	Total number of directly employed Experienced (Level 3) Social Workers	89 80 FTEs	81 75 FTEs	82 76 FTEs	78 72 FTEs	76 71 FTEs
	Agency Social Workers	14 (6.6% of all SWs)	10 (5.4% of all SWs)	9 (4.9% of all SWs)	6 (3.3% of all SWs)	9 (50% of all SWs)
	Percentage of SWs who are at Experienced level (including agency)	44%	46%	46%	42%	44%
	Total number of directly employed Community Resource Workers (CRWs) in post	54 49 FTEs	44 40 FTEs	42 39 FTEs	42 39 FTEs	40 36 FTEs
	Agency CRWs	1 (2.0% of all CRWs)	None	None	None	1 (2.7% of all CRWs)
Workload	Average number of cases per FTE Social Worker	13.8 (16.5 in Long Term Teams)	16.1 (17.6 in Long Term Teams)	17.6 (17.4 in Long Term Teams)	17.8 (18.7 in Long Term Teams)	17.9 (19.5 in Long Term Teams)
	Average number of cases per FTE CRW	11.5	12.4	11.7	12.5	12.2
	Average number of LAC cases (including cases in proceedings) per FTE LAC case holding worker	6.8 (15.0 in LAC teams)	6.6 (14.5 in LAC teams)	7.0 (14.9 in LAC teams)	7.7 (13.0 in Through Care teams)	8.6 (15.3 in Through Care teams)
	Average number of CP cases per FTE CP case holding worker	6.1	6.7	6.9	7.6	7.3
	Average number of cases in Public Law Care Proceedings per FTE PLCP case holding worker	2.8	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.9
Utilisation of Resources	Percentage of LAC cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	48% (428 cases)	48% (421 cases)	50% (434 cases)	50% (467 cases)	53% (479 cases)
	Percentage of cases where a child has a Child Protection Plan allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	44% (182 cases)	41% (178 cases)	32% (162 cases)	42% (232 cases)	38% (186 cases)
	Percentage of Public Law Proceedings Cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	46% (73 cases)	52% (70 cases)	59% (84 cases)	50% (78 cases)	55% (82 cases)

b) Caseload Analysis

Active cases held by Social Workers and Community Resource Workers working in Care Management Teams at 30th September 2017.

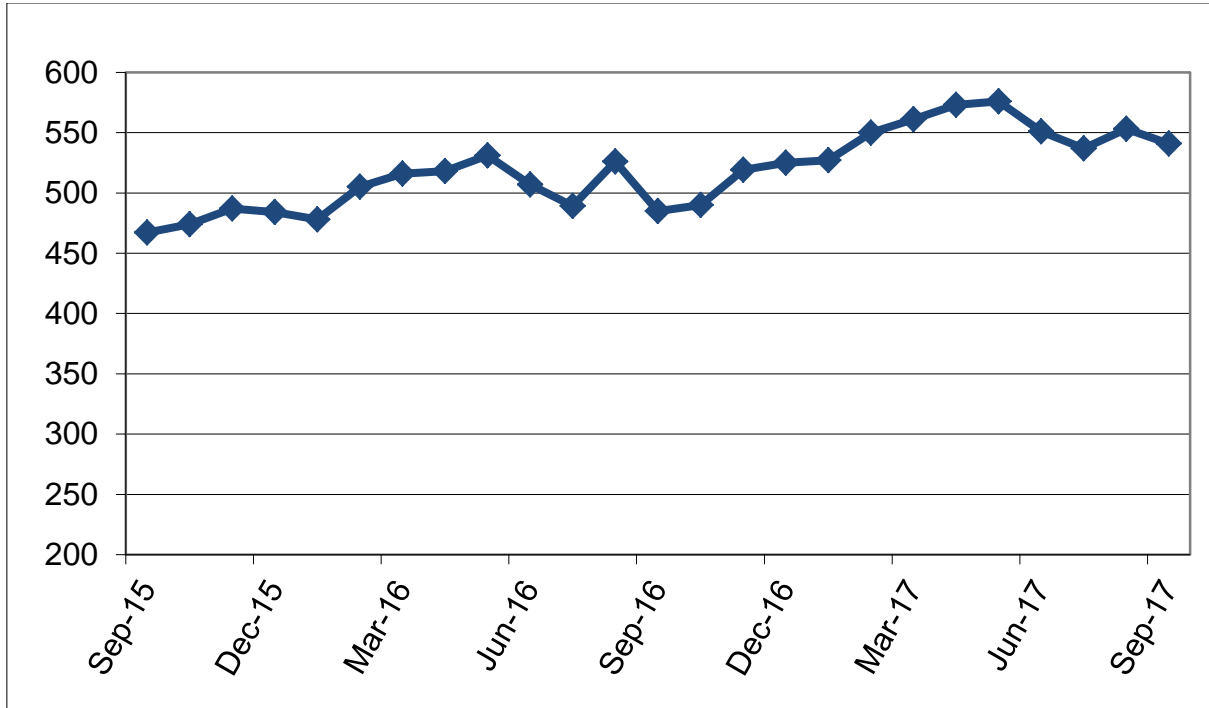
Of the 4084 active cases held by Children's Social Care: 23% were looked after children (958), 13% were children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan and not also LAC (531) and 64% were other Children in Need, including cases still undergoing assessment.





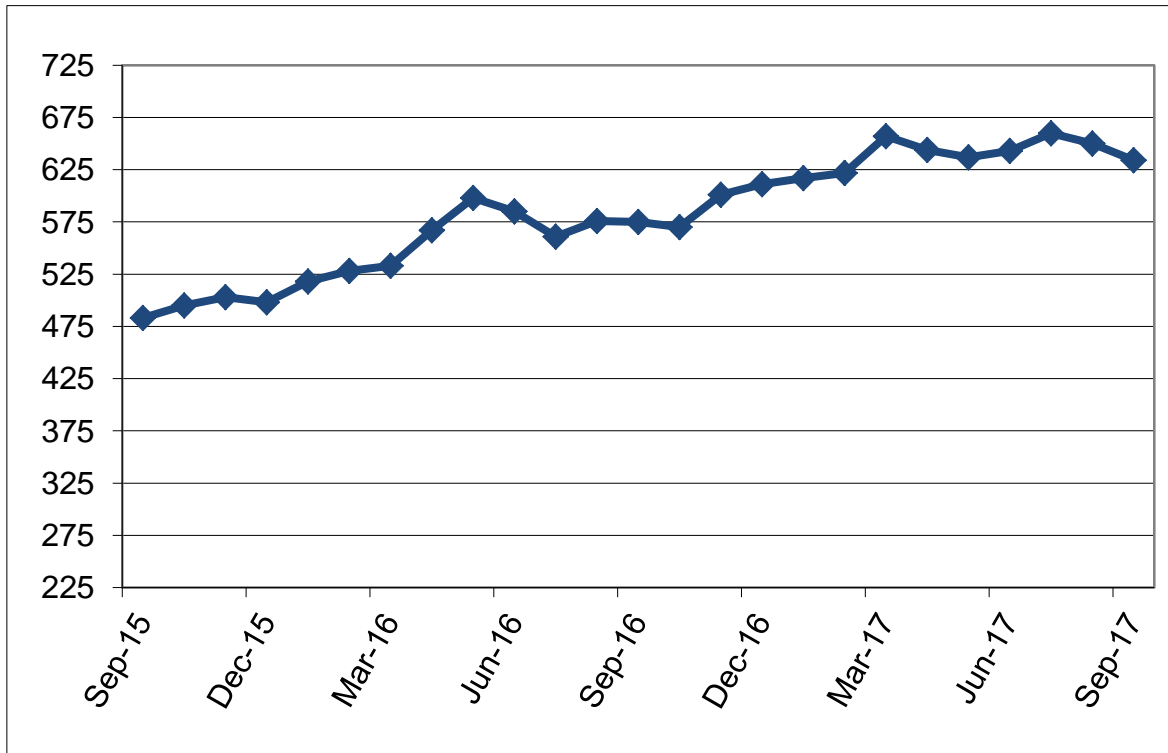
Appendix 2: Workload Pressures

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



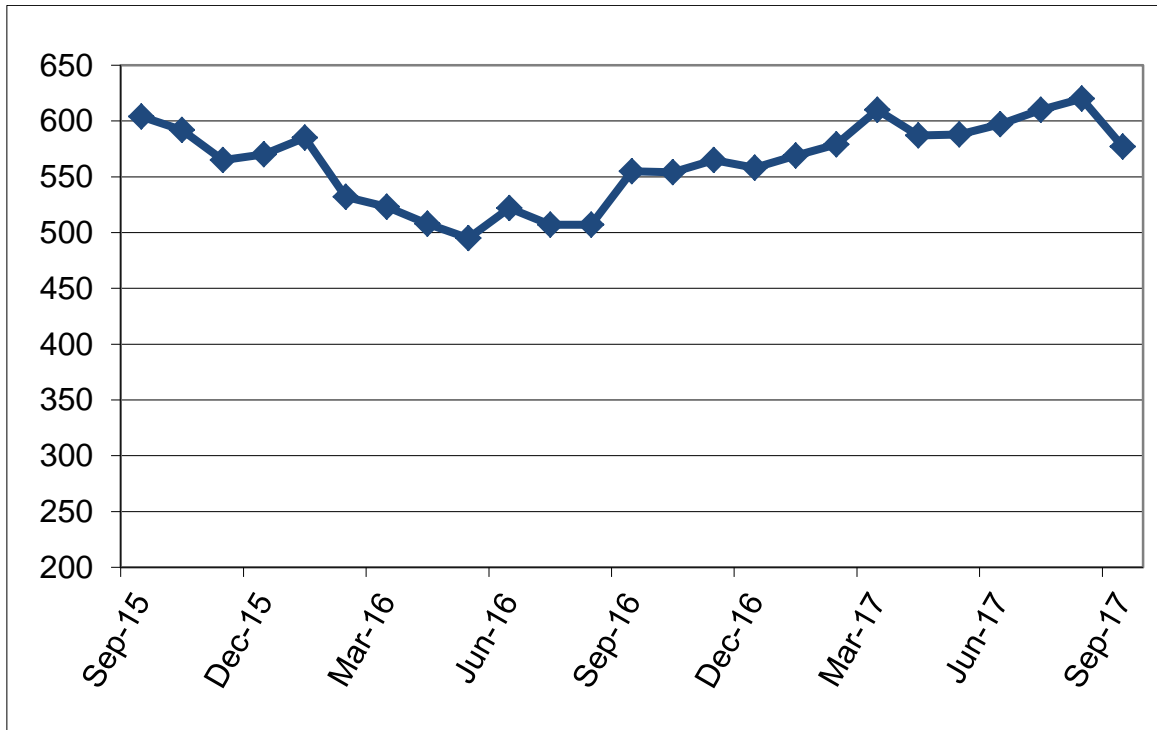
2.1 Total Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

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



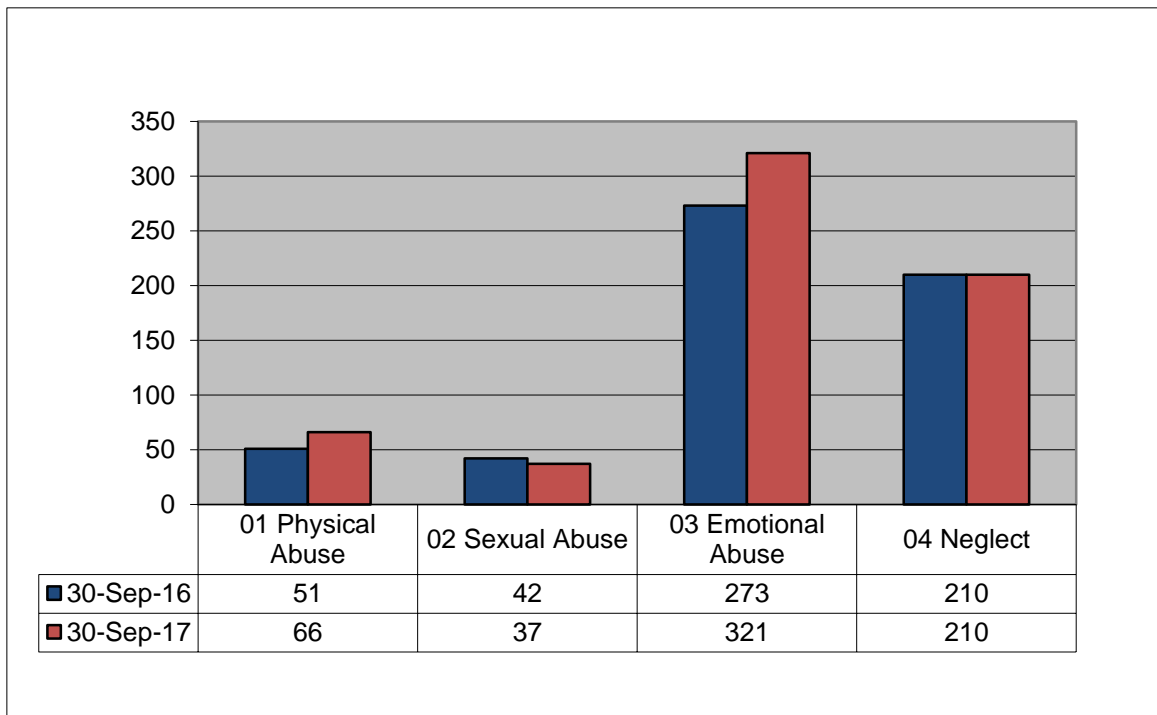
2.2 Children who became the subject of a Child Protection Plan

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



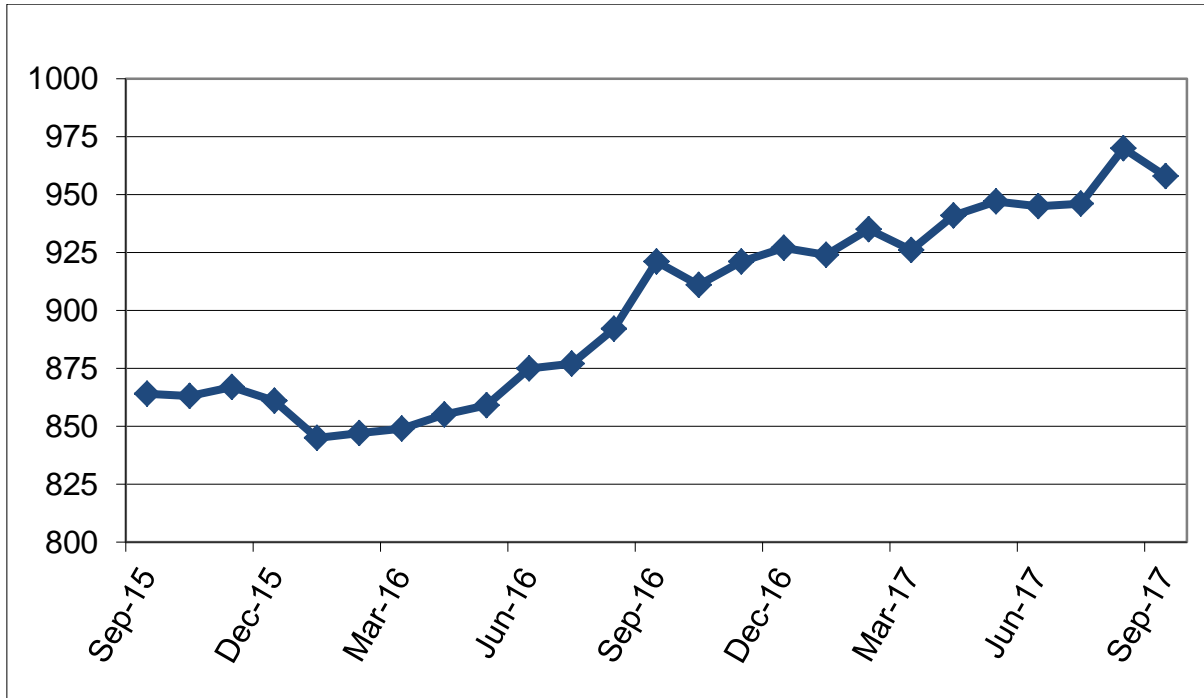
2.3 Children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan

2.4 – Number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the years ending 30th September 2016 and 2017 by category of abuse



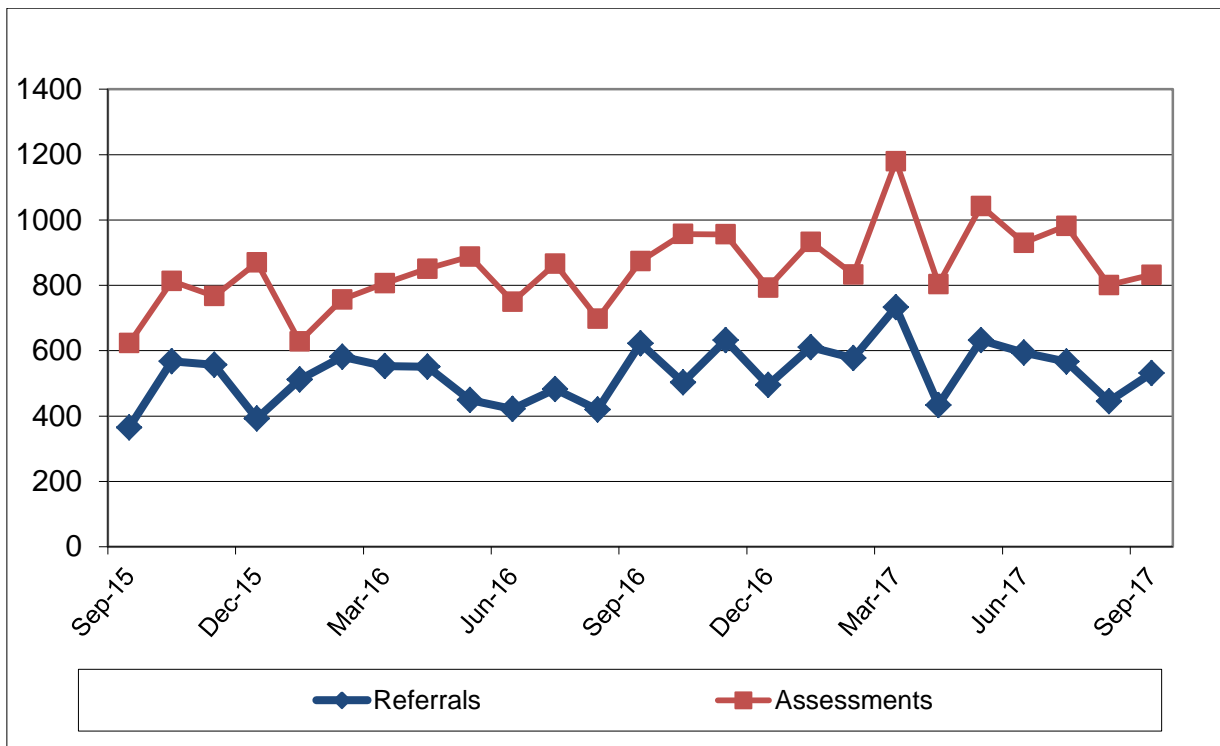
2.4 Children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan in the year, by category of abuse

**2.5 – Number of Looked after Children
(September 2015 to September 2017)**



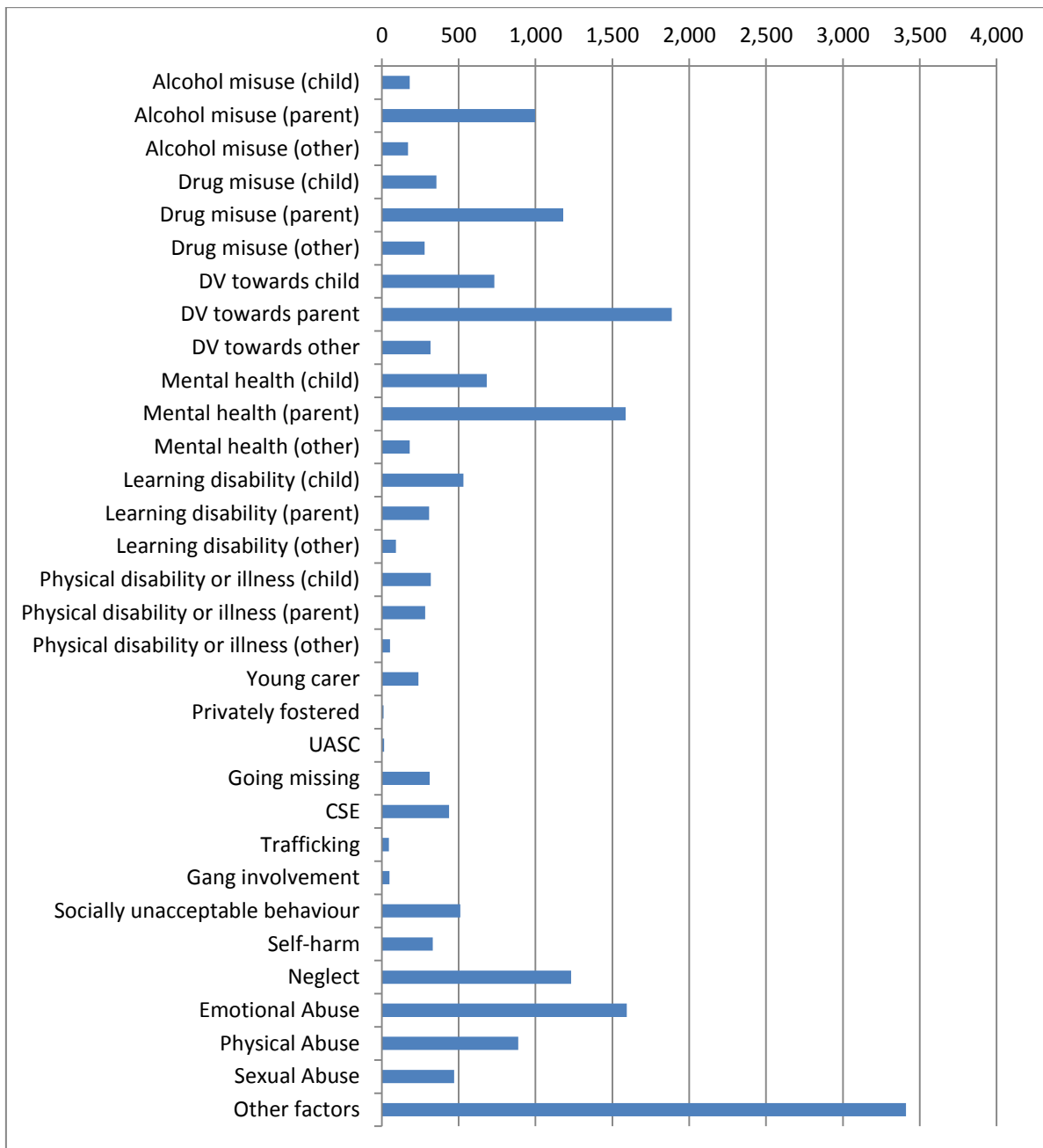
2.5 Number of Looked After Children

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

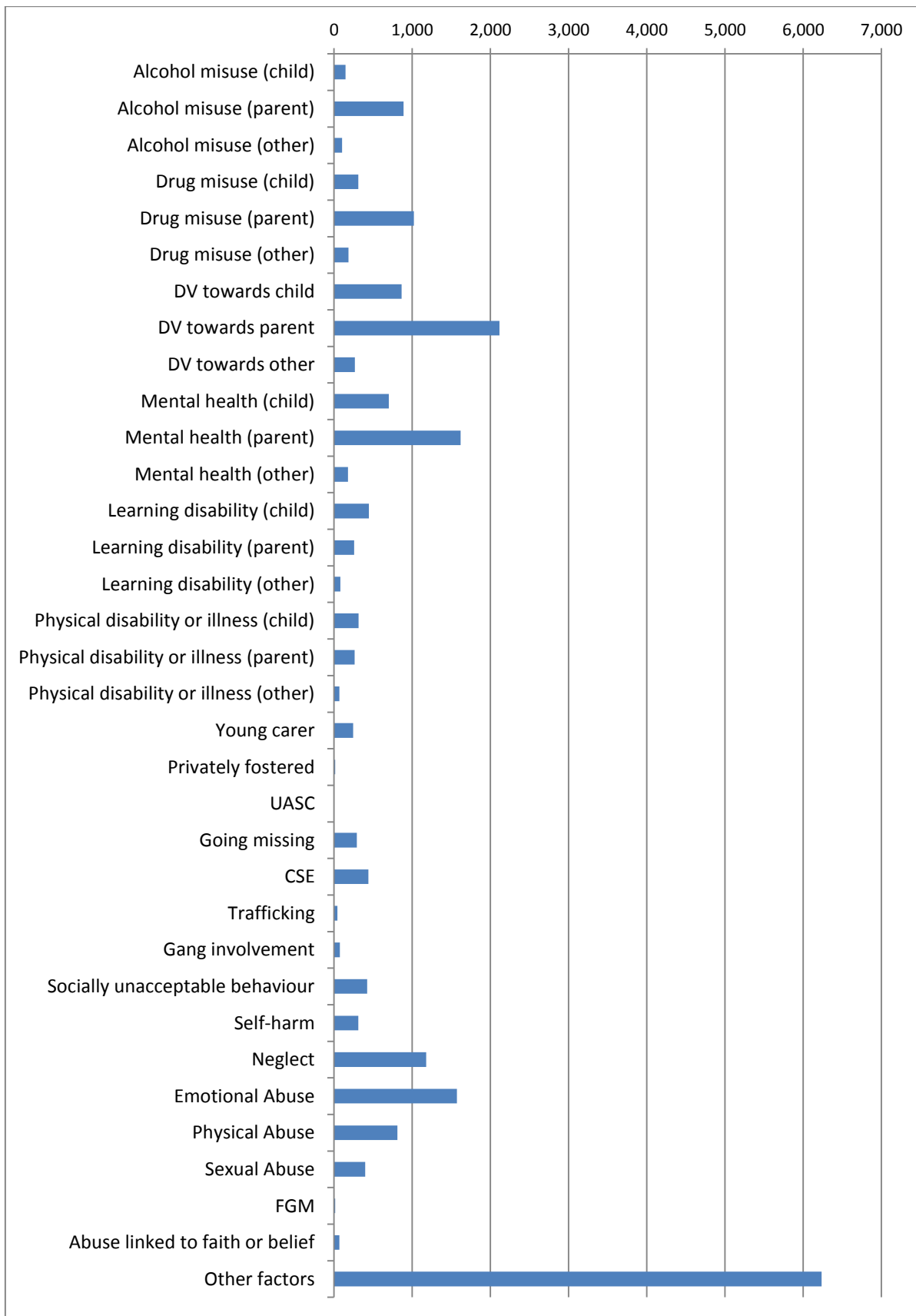


2.6 Numbers of Referrals received and Assessments completed each month

**2.7 – Factors of Need Identified by Assessments
(Financial Years 2015-16 and 2016-17)**



2.7 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2015-16



2.8 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2016-17