

## **Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

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**Subject:**

**AH**

**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> December 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> December 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 180 Social Workers (169 full time equivalents) in Children’s Social Care directly employed by the Council. Within the front line assessment teams, MASH and long term child and family teams, approximately 33% of the social workers are newly qualified (AYSE) 33% are between 1 year and 2 years qualified and 33% are our “experienced workers” who are qualified for 2.5years or more.

3.1.3 At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 there were 12 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
3 - 4 to 6 months
1 - 7 to 12 months
3 - over 12 months

Bradford overall has 42% of Social Workers (including agency workers) who are experienced social workers with high levels of experience and training. This percentage is slightly lower than in December 2016 when it was 46%. 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 18.8 cases, an increase from 16.18 in December 2016. Within the long term Social Work teams this figure is 19.3 cases per FTE (compared to 17.6 in December 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 11.3 (compared to 12.4 at December 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. Caseloads have increased over the past 12 months due to the increased volume of referrals and assessments required in children's social care. This pressure is felt particularly in our front line assessment and long term child and family teams, rather than other areas of the service. The caseloads are frequently monitored to ensure that social workers are not holding too much work. Currently (as of 28th February 2018) out of 90 qualified social workers in our long term child and family teams, 23 hold caseloads which are 25 cases or more, though some of these will be cases that are being co-worked with less experienced workers. All of our AYSE staff have appropriate caseloads and are supported with co working. We do want to reduce the caseload size in the long term teams and are working hard to achieve this as part of our service improvement plan.
- 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. This is currently being adapted to report straight from our LCS (case records) system for easier monitoring and comparison between teams. The weighting system does reveal pressure particularly in the long term child and family teams where caseloads are the highest. This is due to the increased activity during 2017, with a higher rate of referrals and assessments and work throughout the system.
- 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 7.7, rising to 14.5 cases for the dedicated Through Care Teams. This is an increase from December 2016 when the average number of cases held was 6.6.
- 3.1.7 37% of cases where a child has a child protection plan are allocated to an experienced social worker, a figure which has fallen from 41% in December 2016. Social Workers in the Children and Family Teams involved with Children with a Child Protection Plan hold on average 6.5 such cases, a similar figure to December 2016 when it was 6.7.
- 3.1.8 48% of Public Law proceedings cases are allocated to an experienced social worker, a reduction from 52% in December 2016. The average number of Public Law cases per FTE Social Worker is 3.0, higher than the December 2016 figure of 2.4.
- 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 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 rising over the last two years but has seen a fall in the last six months; there were 532 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 compared to 576 at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 and 525 in December 2016. The numbers of children who became the subject of a plan has seen a similar pattern over the same period, with 609 plans starting in the year to December 2017 compared to 660 in the year to July 2017. The numbers of children's plans ending has been gradually rising, with 598 plans closed in the year to December 2017 compared to 558 in the year to December 2016.
- 3.2.2 The proportions of children subject to plans under each category at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 are: Physical abuse 10%; sexual abuse 6%; emotional abuse 51%; neglect 33%. The proportions are similar to those in December 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 slightly lower than regional and national averages. The current rate of children subject to a child protection plan is 37.7 per 10,000 child population (at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017) whereas the most recent published national rate is 43.3 per 10,000 and the regional average is 43.0 per 10,000 (at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017). 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 is it hoped that this trend will continue.
- 3.2.4 During the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, 8.2% 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 6.2%. 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 2.6% in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017; this compares to 3.4% in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 there were 298 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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 978 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 – significantly higher than the figure of 927 in December 2016. This equates to 69.3 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 32 adoptions and 23 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in the year to December 2017, compared to 47 adoptions and 37 SGOs in the year to December 2016. 245 Looked After Children are in Family & Friends foster placements, similar to the 243 in September 2016; there are ongoing Allowances being paid to families for 319 children on an SGO who were previously Looked After.

3.3.3 A permanence panel is now in place which will track the permanence decisions for all looked after children, this weekly panel will ensure there is no drift on decision making, it will monitor long term fostering matches, review of placement with parents arrangements over 12 months, friends and family placements over 12 months and ratify care plans and discharge care orders. We expect this panel to have an impact on the number of children who are looked after.

3.3.4 The long term stability of Looked After Children has remained steady in the last year. 69.2% 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 70.0% 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 December 2016 and December 2017, use of external residential placements fell by 22% with internal residential reducing by 13%. 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 71% 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 with a weekly cost of £12K; at this time this is the right setting for these two young people. The specialist home at Hollybank Road will open on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018, two young people in external placements have been identified to return to this home.

- 3.3.5 The Fostering recruitment and assessment process in Bradford has been changed significantly. As a result we have approved a further 67 fostering households in Bradford since April 2017 with 2 households ceasing to foster. This is made up of 14 mainstream, 50 connected persons, 3 early permanence placements. We are currently assessing a number of households who have expressed an interest in fostering for Bradford. Internal fostering remains close to capacity. We have launched two Mockingbird fostering hubs within the city, one will target mainstream carers the other connected persons.
- 3.3.6 All Looked After Children have an allocated worker; most have an experienced Social Worker. Currently only 1 case is allocated to a Community Resource Worker, much of which is work within the Through Care team with young people preparing for moves into independent living.
- 3.3.7 The number of children subject to Public Law Care Proceedings cases has risen slightly over the past 12 months. At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 there were 135 cases in Public Law Care Proceedings (there were 134 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016).
- 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. 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 team's 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 children is coming to O&S later in the year.

#### **3.4 Referrals and Assessments**

- 3.4.1 The number of referrals received by Social Care Services has increased to about 580 per month over the last year, compared to about 520 per month for the year before.
- 3.4.2 The number of assessments being undertaken by Social Workers is also high. About 930 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 4205 children's cases open as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 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.

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.

## **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:

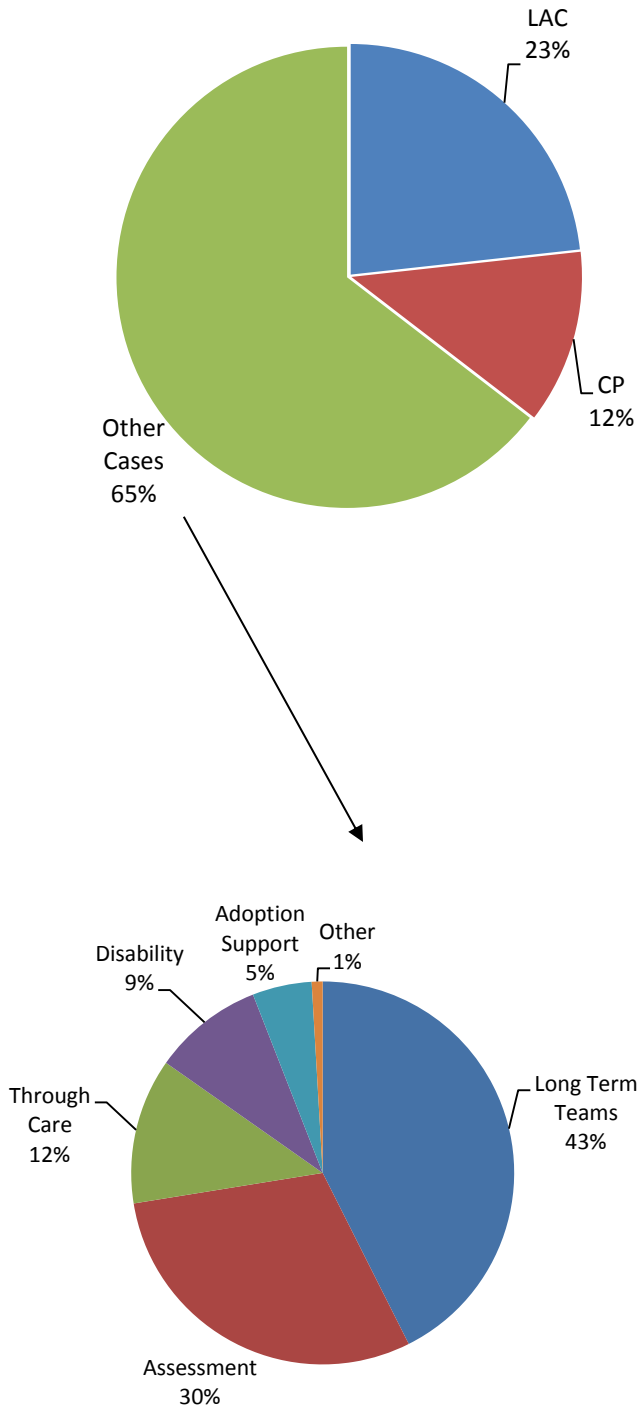
### a) Workforce/Workload Analysis

		31st Dec 2016	31st Mar 2017	30th June 2017	30th Sept 2017	31st Dec 2017
<b>Workforce Profile</b>	Total number of directly employed Social Workers in post	186 175 FTEs	187 175 FTEs	189 178 FTEs	182 170 FTEs	180 169 FTEs
	Total number of directly employed Experienced (Level 3) Social Workers	81 75 FTEs	82 76 FTEs	78 72 FTEs	76 71 FTEs	69 65 FTEs
	Agency Social Workers	10 (5.4% of all SWs)	9 (4.9% of all SWs)	6 (3.3% of all SWs)	9 (5.0% of all SWs)	12 (6.6% of all SWs)
	Percentage of SWs who are at Experienced level (including agency)	46%	46%	42%	44%	42%
	Total number of directly employed Community Resource Workers (CRWs) in post	44 40 FTEs	42 39 FTEs	42 39 FTEs	40 36 FTEs	38 34 FTEs
	Agency CRWs	None	None	None	1 (2.7% of all CRWs)	1 (2.9% of all CRWs)
<b>Workload</b>	Average number of cases per FTE Social Worker	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)	18.8 (19.3 in Long Term Teams)
	Average number of cases per FTE CRW	12.4	11.7	12.5	12.2	11.3
	Average number of LAC cases (including cases in proceedings) per FTE LAC case holding worker	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)	7.7 (14.5 in Through Care teams)
	Average number of CP cases per FTE CP case holding worker	6.7	6.9	7.6	7.3	6.5
	Average number of cases in Public Law Care Proceedings per FTE PLCP case holding worker	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.9	3.0
<b>Utilisation of Resources</b>	Percentage of LAC cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	48% (421 cases)	50% (434 cases)	50% (467 cases)	53% (479 cases)	53% (478 cases)
	Percentage of cases where a child has a Child Protection Plan allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	41% (178 cases)	32% (162 cases)	42% (232 cases)	38% (186 cases)	37% (158 cases)
	Percentage of Public Law Proceedings Cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	52% (70 cases)	59% (84 cases)	50% (78 cases)	55% (82 cases)	48% (65 cases)

## b) Caseload Analysis

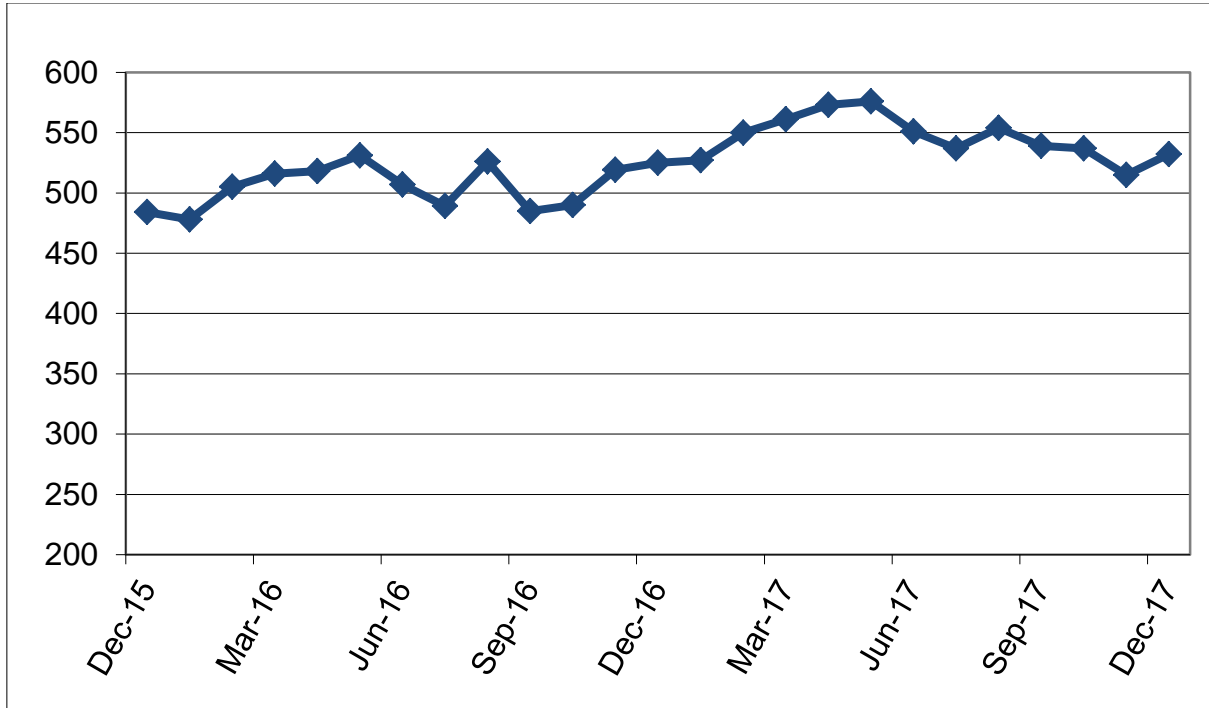
### Active cases held by Social Workers and Community Resource Workers working in Care Management Teams at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

Of the 4205 active cases held by Children's Social Care: 23% were looked after children (978), 12% were children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan and not also LAC (512) and 65% were other Children in Need, including cases still undergoing assessment.



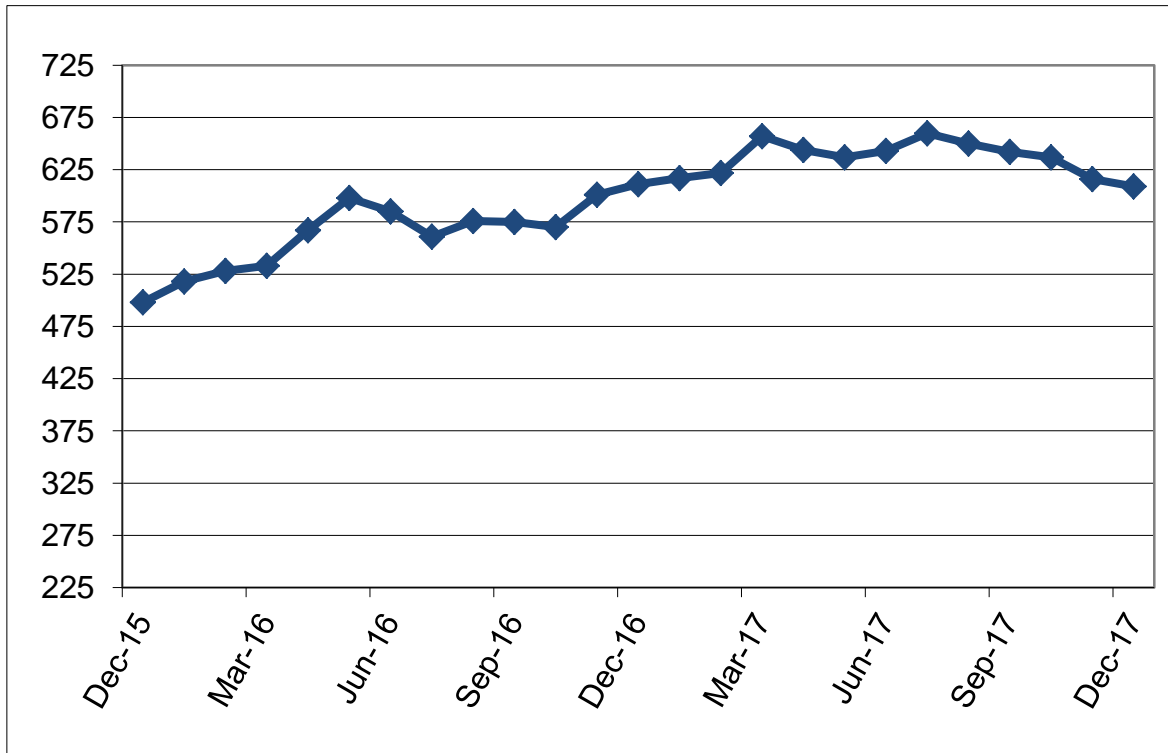
**Appendix 2: Workload Pressures**

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



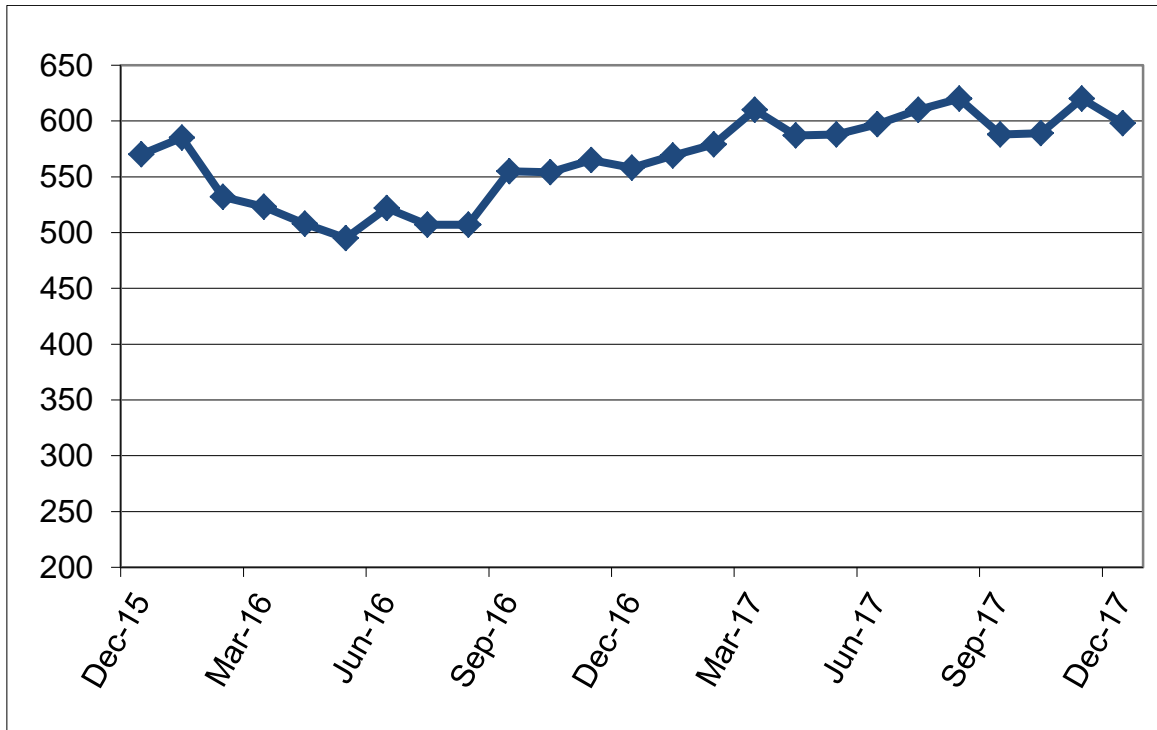
2.1 Total Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

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



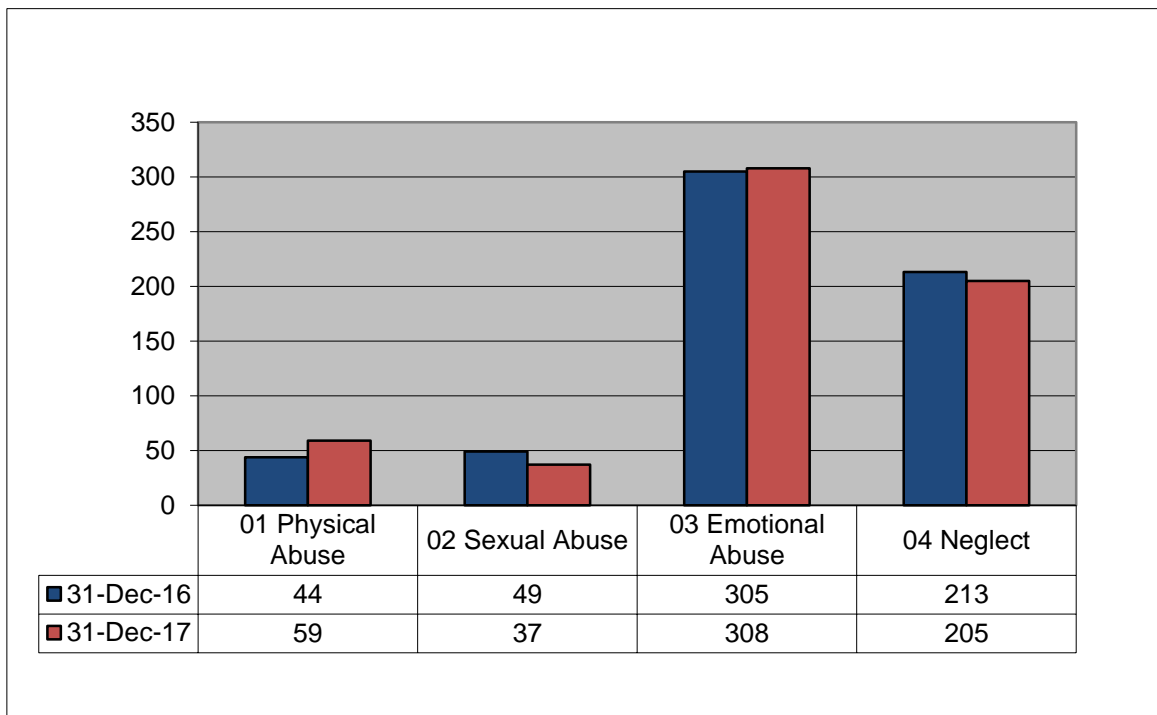
2.2 Children who became the subject of a Child Protection Plan

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



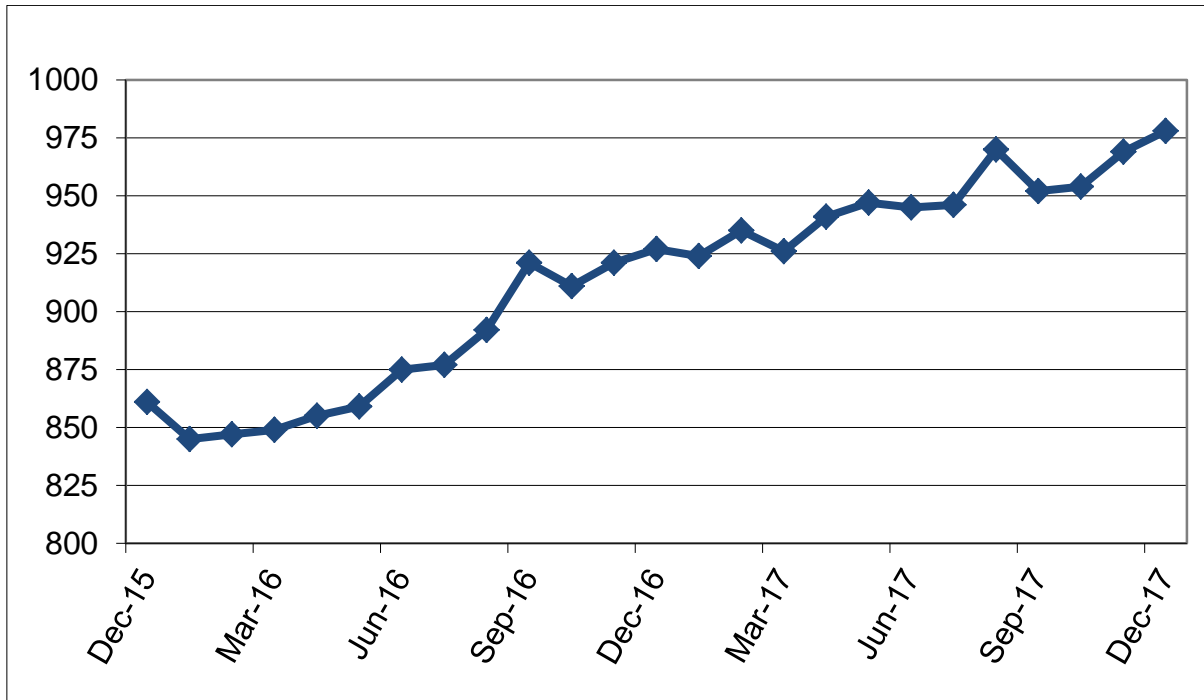
2.3 Children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan

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



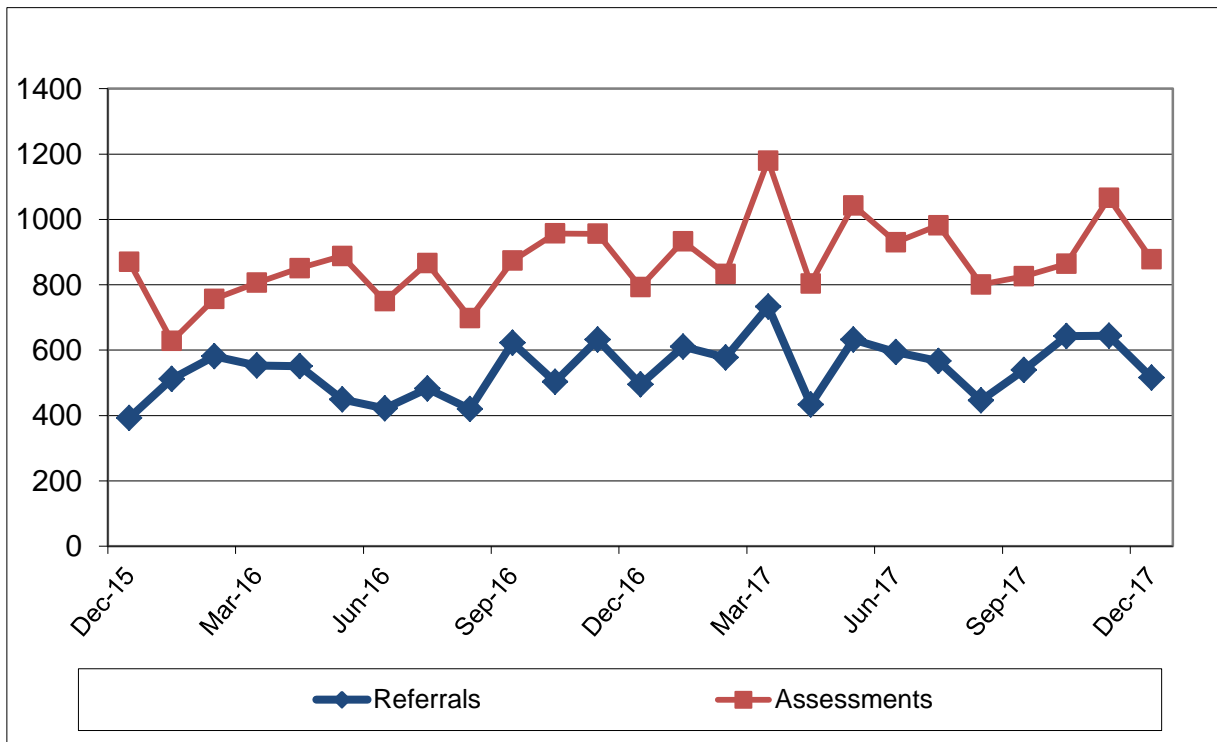
2.4 Children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan in the year, by category of abuse

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



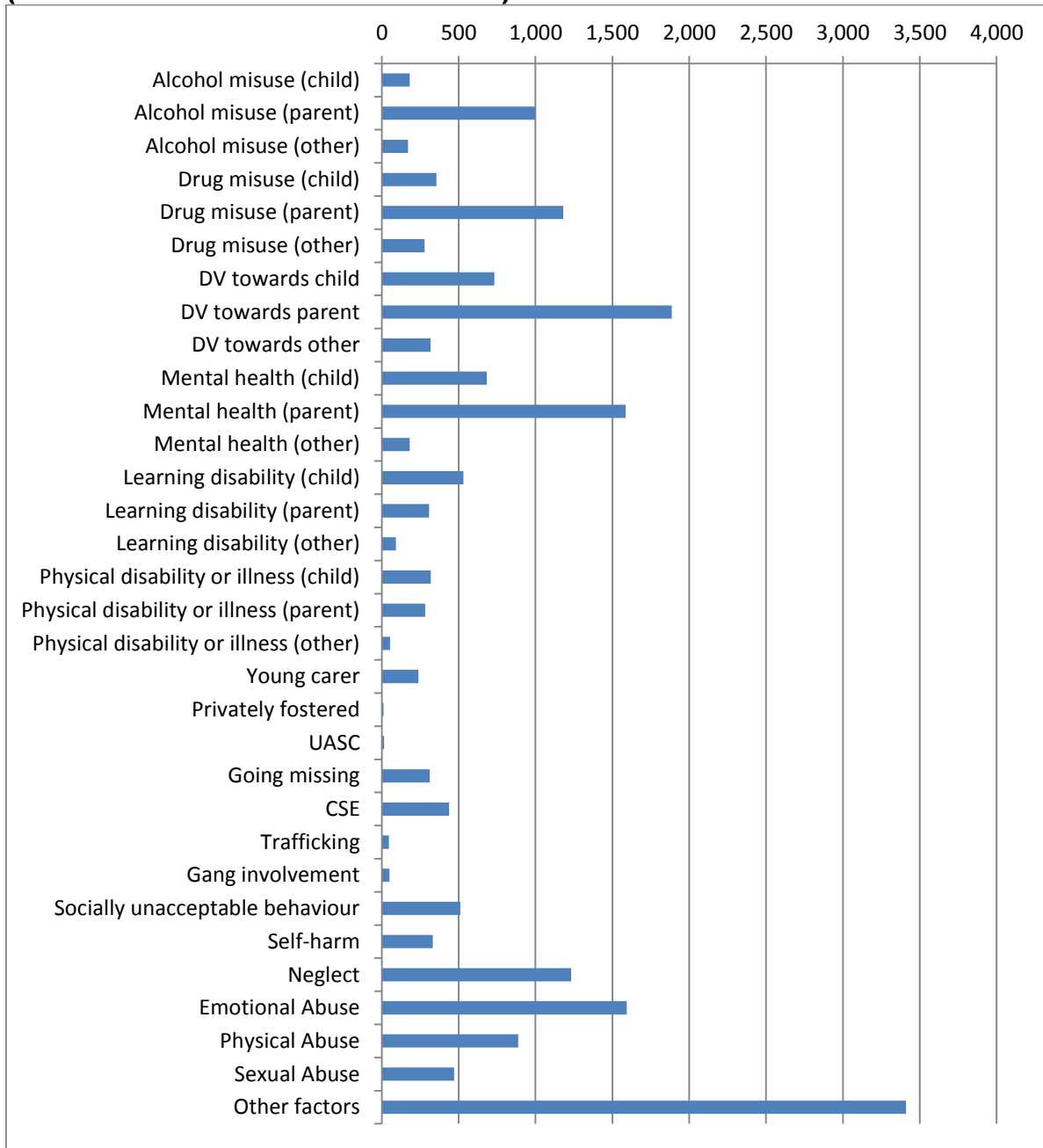
2.5 Number of Looked After Children

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

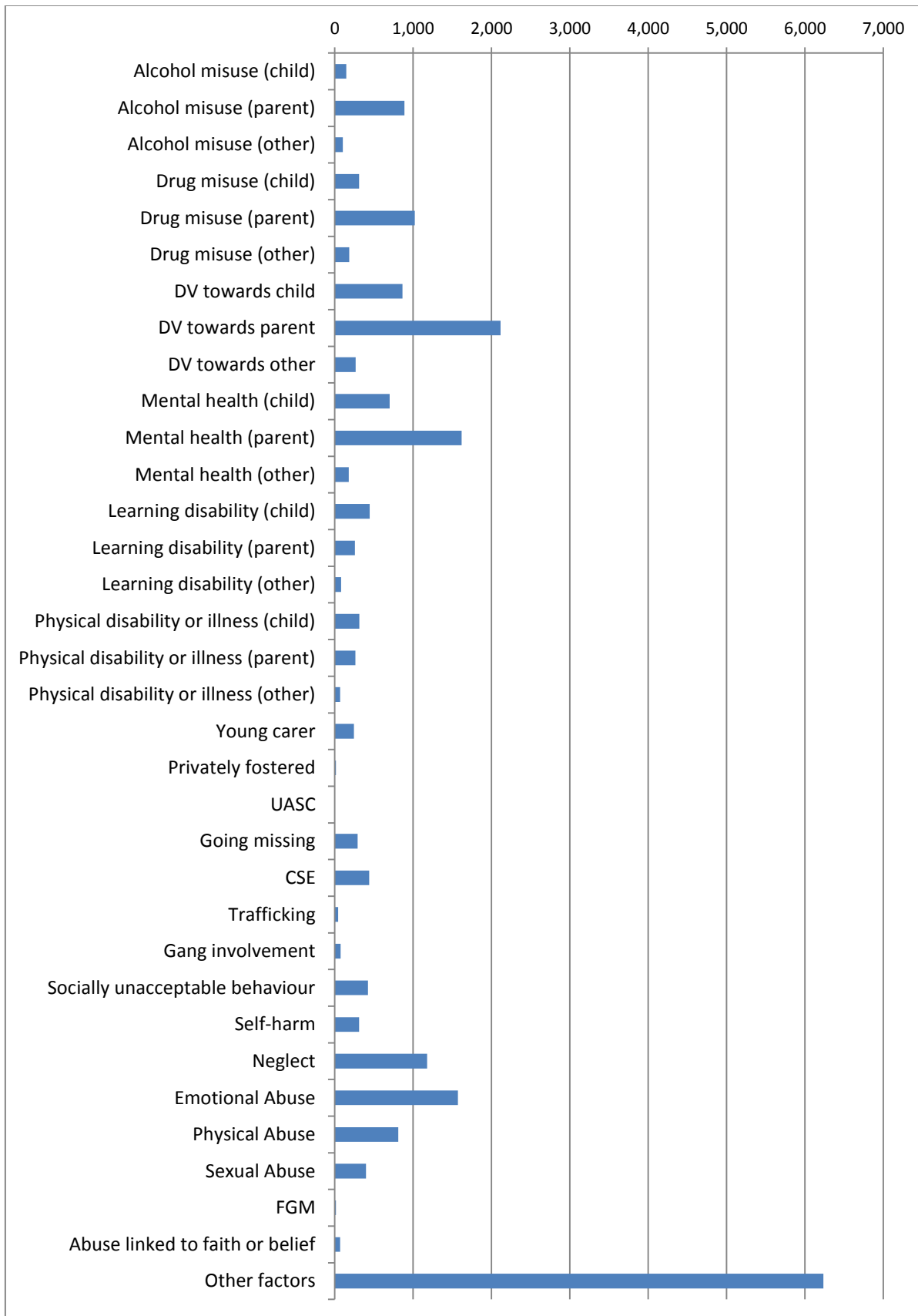


2.6 Numbers of Referrals received and Assessments completed each month

**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**



### Appendix 3: Sickness Absence

Dept/ Service	Section	Sub-Section(s)	Number of staff by end of Dec 2016	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Oct 2016 - 31 Dec 2016	Number of staff by end of Dec 2017	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Oct 2017 - 31 Dec 2017	Performance compared with previous year Arrow up = improvement Arrow down = decline
<b>Children's Specialist Services</b>			751.93	5.37	723.24	4.70	
	<b>Targeted Early Help</b>	-Early Help District -Early Help Clusters -Families First co-ordination -Youth Offending	171.45	6.92	170.71	4.66	
	<b>Prevention &amp; Resources</b>	-Fostering -Children's Homes -Disabilities & Complex Needs -Through Care	390.94	4.63	352.24	4.92	
	<b>Social Work Services</b>	-Front Door -Assessment Teams -Child and Family Teams	188.54	2.76	199.29	4.37	
<b>Performance, Commissioning &amp; Partnerships</b>	<b>Child Protection</b>	-Safeguarding Administration -Reviewing Team	48.15	1.76	32.78	1.15	