

Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 18th July 2018

Subject:

A

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 March 2018.

There has been a further slight rise to the overall workloads of social workers, and pressures upon the service since the last report was presented.

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Portfolio:
Children and Families

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 31st March 2018. 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.

Workforce/Workload Issues

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 There are 182 Social Workers (171 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 34 Community Resource Workers (CRWs) or 29 FTEs.
- 2.9 At 31st March 2018 there were 19 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:

9 - under 3 months
4 - 4 to 6 months
3 - 7 to 12 months
3 - over 12 months

Bradford has 40% 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 slightly lower than in March 2017 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 exit interviews show that some neighbouring authorities pay more than Bradford and this has been a factor for Social Workers.

- 2.10 The average caseload per full time equivalent (FTE) Social Worker is 19.6 cases, an increase from 17.6 in March 2017. 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 12.3 (compared to 11.7 at March 2017). The most recent published figures from the DfE (2016-17) showed a national average of 17.8 cases per FTE social worker and a regional average of 18.1 cases. Bradford has created an additional 8 Social Work posts. Our analysis is that if these and all vacant posts were filled, then case loads would be below the national and regional average.

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 49% of looked after child cases are held by an experienced social worker. The average number of LAC cases held by each FTE worker is 8.0, rising to 14.5 cases for the dedicated Through Care Teams. This is an increase from March 2017 when the average number of cases held was 7.0.
- 2.13 42% of cases where a child has a child protection plan are allocated to an experienced social worker, a figure which has risen from 32% in March 2017.
- 2.14 55% of Public Law proceedings cases are allocated to an experienced social worker, a reduction from 59% in March 2017. The average number of Public Law cases per FTE Social Worker is 2.6, similar to the March 2017 figure of 2.7.
- 2.15 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)

Child Protection

- 2.16 The overall trend in the numbers of children who are the subject of a child protection plan has remained steady over the last year. There were 568 at 31st March 2018 compared to 561 in March 2017. The numbers of children who became the subject of a plan has fallen, with 581 plans starting in the year to March 2018 compared to 657 in the year to March 2017. The numbers of children's plans ending has also reduced, with 573 plans closed in the year to March 2018 compared to 610 in the year to March 2017.
- 2.17 The proportions of children subject to plans under each category at 31st March 2018 are: Physical abuse 12%; sexual abuse 6%; emotional abuse 52%; neglect 30%. This is broadly similar to March 2017 except that the proportion of plans for physical abuse has risen from 7% in the year. Quality assurance through 'challenge panels' indicates that reasons for a child requiring a child protection plan are accurately and consistently recorded.
- 2.18 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 40.2 per 10,000 child population (at 31st March 2018)

whereas the most recent published national rate is 43.3 per 10,000 and the regional average is 43.0 per 10,000 (at 31st 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.

- 2.19 During the year to 31st March 2018, 6.4% 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 4.8%. 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.
- 2.20 The percentage of Child Protection Plans lasting for 2 years has increased slightly over the last year, with 3.4% in the year to 31st March 2018; this compares to 2.5% in the year to March 2017. 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.
- 2.21 All children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan have an allocated Social Worker.

(Refer to Appendices 2.1 – 2.4)

- 2.22 As at 31st March 2018 there were 300 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. All high and medium risk cases have a qualified allocated social worker and input from the CSE Hub.

Looked After Children

- 2.23 The number of looked after children has seen a sharp rise in the last 18 months. The number of children being looked after is 996 at 31st March 2018 – significantly higher than the figure of 926 in March 2017. This equates to 70.5 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).
- 2.24 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 27 adoptions and 23 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in the year to March 2018, compared to 42 adoptions and 33 SGOs in the year to March 2017. 264 Looked After Children are in Family & Friends foster placements, more than the 220 in March 2017; there are ongoing Allowances being paid to families for 319 children on an SGO who were previously Looked After.

- 2.25 The long term stability of Looked After Children has fallen slightly in the last year. 67.5% 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 69.3% the previous year). This is slightly lower than the most recently published national average of 70% (March 2017).
- 2.26 There has been a sharp fall in our use of external residential care. Between March 2017 and March 2018, use of external residential placements fell by 13% with internal residential reducing by 22%. The reduction in internal residential is a direct result of closing one home. A new home opened in March 2018 and is now taking children who were previously placed externally or whose plans were for an external placement. 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 Foster placements by 71 in the year to March 2018. We have also significantly increased our usage of IFA's as part of our commitment to family settings.
- 2.27 All Looked After Children have an allocated worker; most have an experienced Social Worker. Currently 9 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.
- 2.28 The number of children subject to Public Law Care Proceedings cases has risen slightly over the past 12 months. At 31st March 2018 there were 169 cases in Public Law Care Proceedings (there were 142 at March 2017).
- 2.29 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 team's knowledge as a whole.
- 2.30 The arrangements to respond to missing children in Bradford is seen as best practice. There is a dedicated Missing Co-ordinator who works alongside a Police Officer to ensure that appropriate reporting strategies are in place and there are 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 that the local procedures are being followed. A full report on missing children is coming to O&S later in the year.
- 2.31 The local restorative protocol between Children's Specialist Service / Youth Offending Team and West Yorkshire Police has been reviewed and will be rolled out across the service during November. This has been changed to reflect the B Positive Pathways model and the Police officers that have been recruited to this 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.

Referrals and Assessments

- 2.32 The number of referrals received by Social Care Services has increased to about 630 per month over the last year, compared to about 540 per month for the year before.
- 2.33 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.
- 2.34 The breakdown of Factors of Need associated with assessments carried out in 2016-17 and 2017-18 can be found in Appendix 2.7.

Children in Need

- 2.35 The total number of children being included within the CIN Census in 2017-18 was 10,191, compared to 9,338 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 4,529 children's cases open as at 31st March 2018.

Workforce Development

- 2.36 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. As well as a rolling programme of recruitment, the Principal Social Worker organised a recruitment fair on 6th June 2018. This elicited considerable interest, including a number of experienced Social Workers interested in returning to Bradford from other Authorities and Social Workers in other sectors interested in returning to Children's work.
- 2.37 A retention allowance (reviewable annually) has been brought in for the Multi-Agency Service Hub (MASH), Assessment and Long-Term Teams. This brings Bradford's pay scales in line with Calderdale.
- 2.38 In addition, a retention allowance (reviewable annually) has been brought in for the Multi-Agency Service Hub (MASH), Assessment and Long-Term Teams.

2.39 The Principal Social Worker (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.

2.40 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.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

None.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE ISSUES

None.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

None.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

None.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None.

7.6 TRADE UNION

None.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

A stable and experienced Children's Workforce is needed to ensure that our Corporate Parenting responsibilities are met. Currently, caseloads and experience amongst our Through Care Teams are reasonable.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY ASSESSMENT

None.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

There are no options for consideration.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee consider further reports in the 2018-19 work programme to ensure the continuation of safe workloads and practice into the future given the current financial climate.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Workload & Caseload Analysis
Appendix 2 – Workload Pressures
Appendix 3 – Departmental Sickness Monitoring

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

Appendix 1:

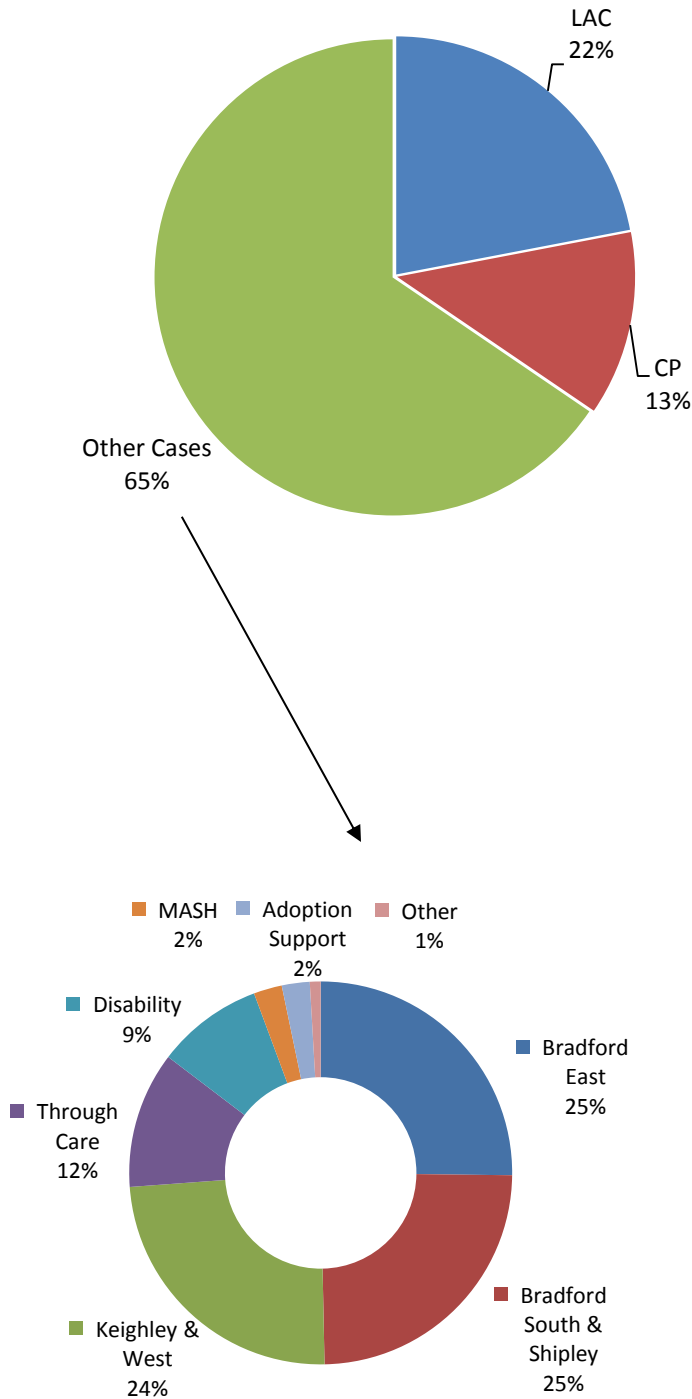
a) Workforce/Workload Analysis

		31st Mar 2017	30th June 2017	30th Sept 2017	31st Dec 2017	31st Mar 2018
Workforce Profile	Total number of directly employed Social Workers in post	187 175 FTEs	189 178 FTEs	182 170 FTEs	180 169 FTEs	182 171 FTEs
	Total number of directly employed Experienced (Level 3) Social Workers	82 76 FTEs	78 72 FTEs	76 71 FTEs	69 65 FTEs	62 58 FTEs
	Agency Social Workers	9 (4.9% of all SWs)	6 (3.3% of all SWs)	9 (5.0% of all SWs)	12 (6.6% of all SWs)	19 (10.0% of all SWs)
	Percentage of SWs who are at Experienced level (including agency)	46%	42%	44%	42%	40%
	Total number of directly employed Community Resource Workers (CRWs) in post	42 39 FTEs	42 39 FTEs	40 36 FTEs	38 34 FTEs	34 29 FTEs
	Agency CRWs	None	None	1 (2.7% of all CRWs)	1 (2.9% of all CRWs)	1 (3.3% of all CRWs)
Workload	Average number of cases per FTE Social Worker	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)	19.6
	Average number of cases per FTE CRW	11.7	12.5	12.2	11.3	12.3
	Average number of LAC cases (including cases in proceedings) per FTE LAC case holding worker	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)	8.0 (14.5 in Through Care teams)
	Average number of CP cases per FTE CP case holding worker	6.9	7.6	7.3	6.5	6.9
	Average number of cases in Public Law Care Proceedings per FTE PLCP case holding worker	2.7	2.6	2.9	3.0	2.6
Utilisation of Resources	Percentage of LAC cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	50% (434 cases)	50% (467 cases)	53% (479 cases)	53% (478 cases)	49% (484 cases)
	Percentage of cases where a child has a Child Protection Plan allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	32% (162 cases)	42% (232 cases)	38% (186 cases)	37% (158 cases)	42% (241 cases)
	Percentage of Public Law Proceedings Cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	59% (84 cases)	50% (78 cases)	55% (82 cases)	48% (65 cases)	55% (93 cases)

b) Caseload Analysis

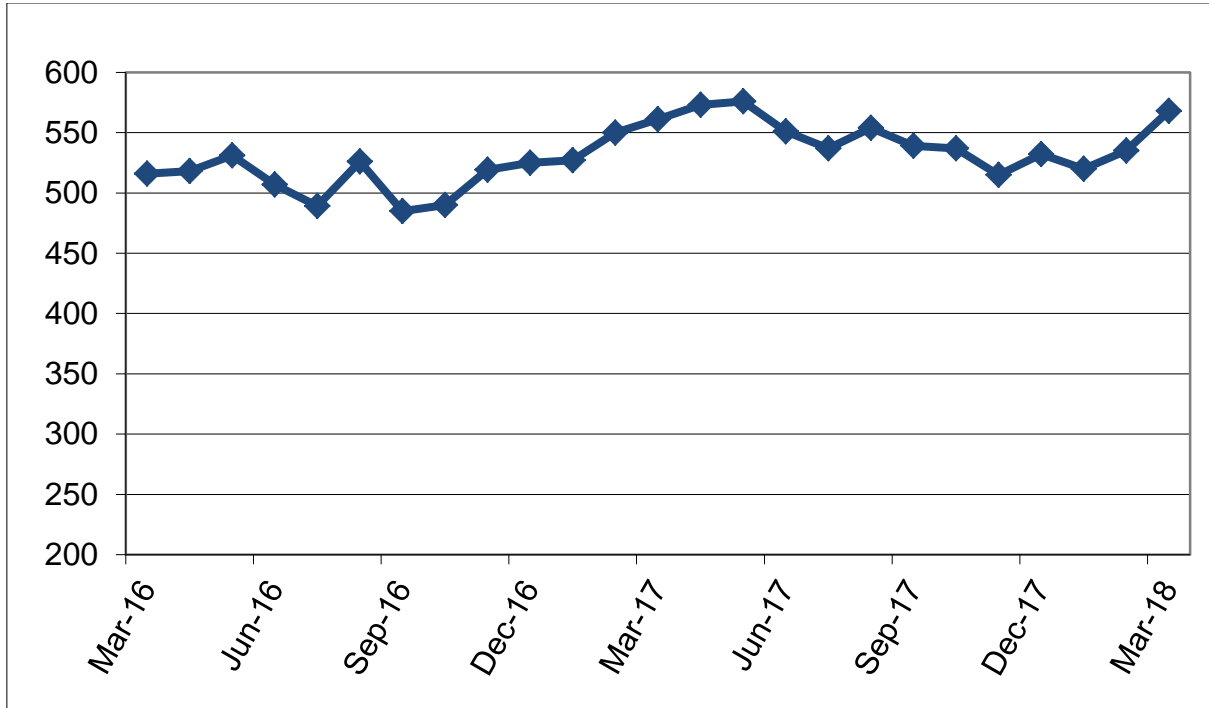
Active cases held by Social Workers and Community Resource Workers working in Care Management Teams at 31st March 2018.

Of the 4529 active cases held by Children's Social Care: 22% were looked after children (996), 13% were children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan and not also LAC (567) and 65% were other Children in Need, including cases still undergoing assessment.



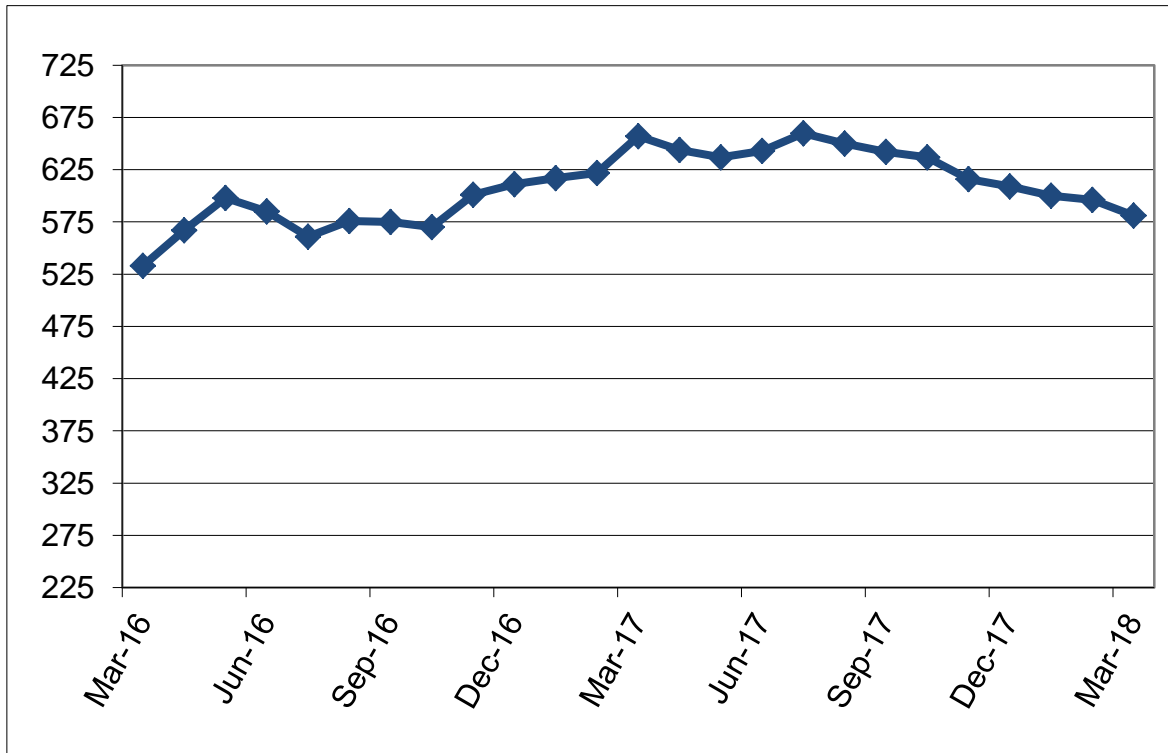
Appendix 2: Workload Pressures

2.1 - Total number of children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan (March 2016 to March 2018)



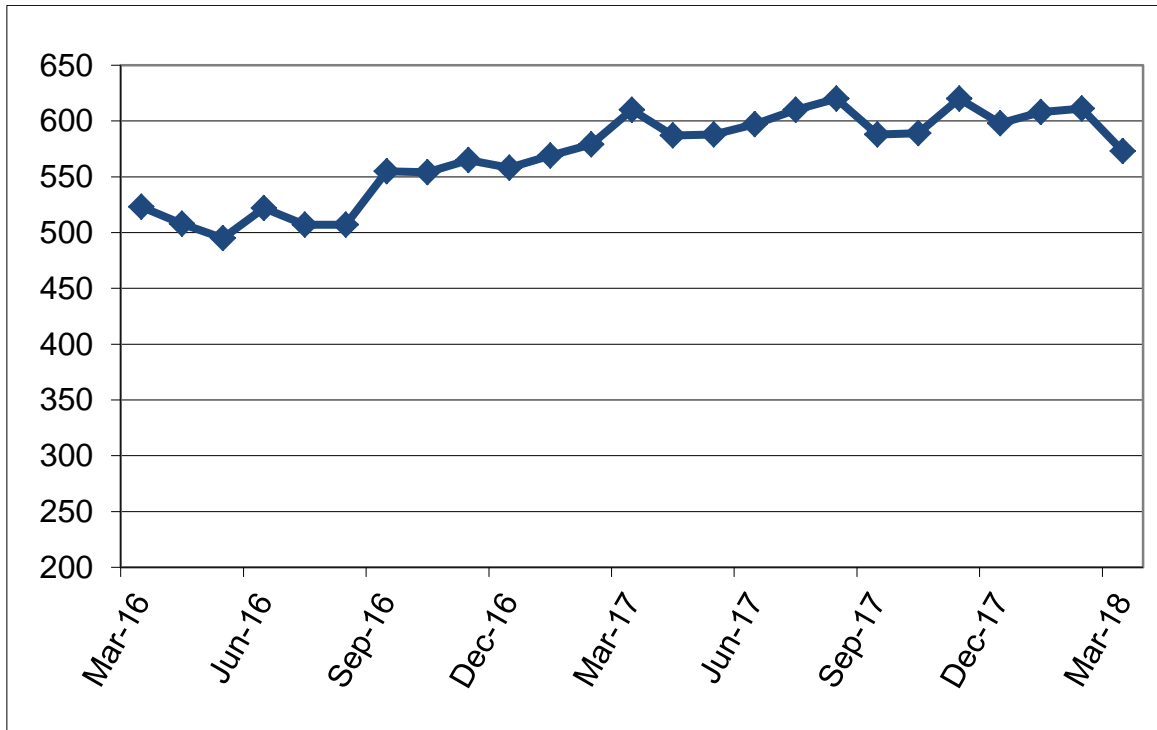
2.1 Total Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

2.2 – Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan (March 2016 to March 2018)



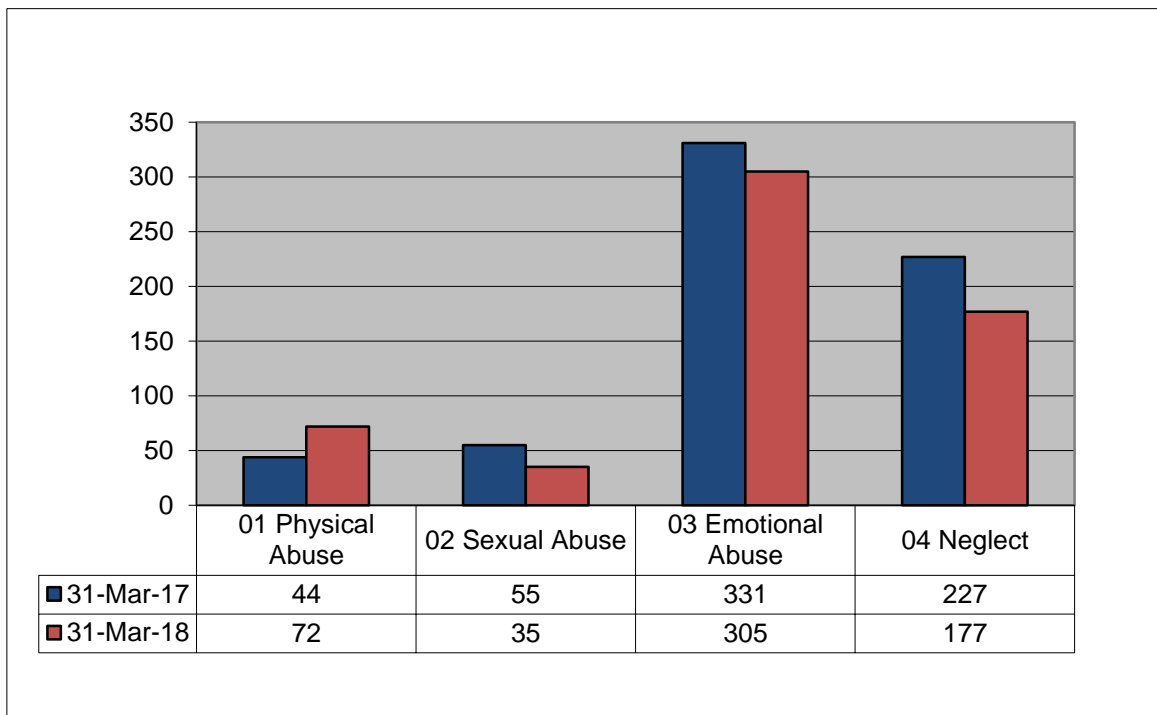
2.2 Children who became the subject of a Child Protection Plan

2.3 – Children ceasing to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan (March 2016 to March 2018)



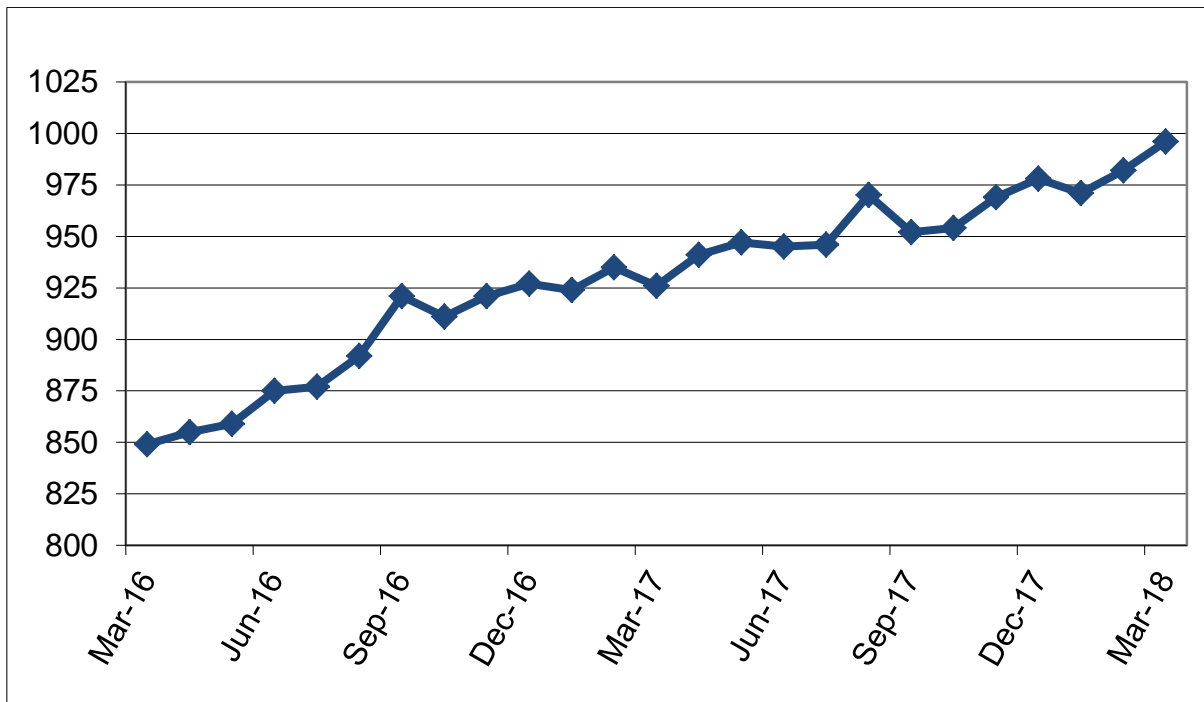
2.3 Children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan

2.4 – Number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the years ending 31st March 2017 and 2018 by category of abuse



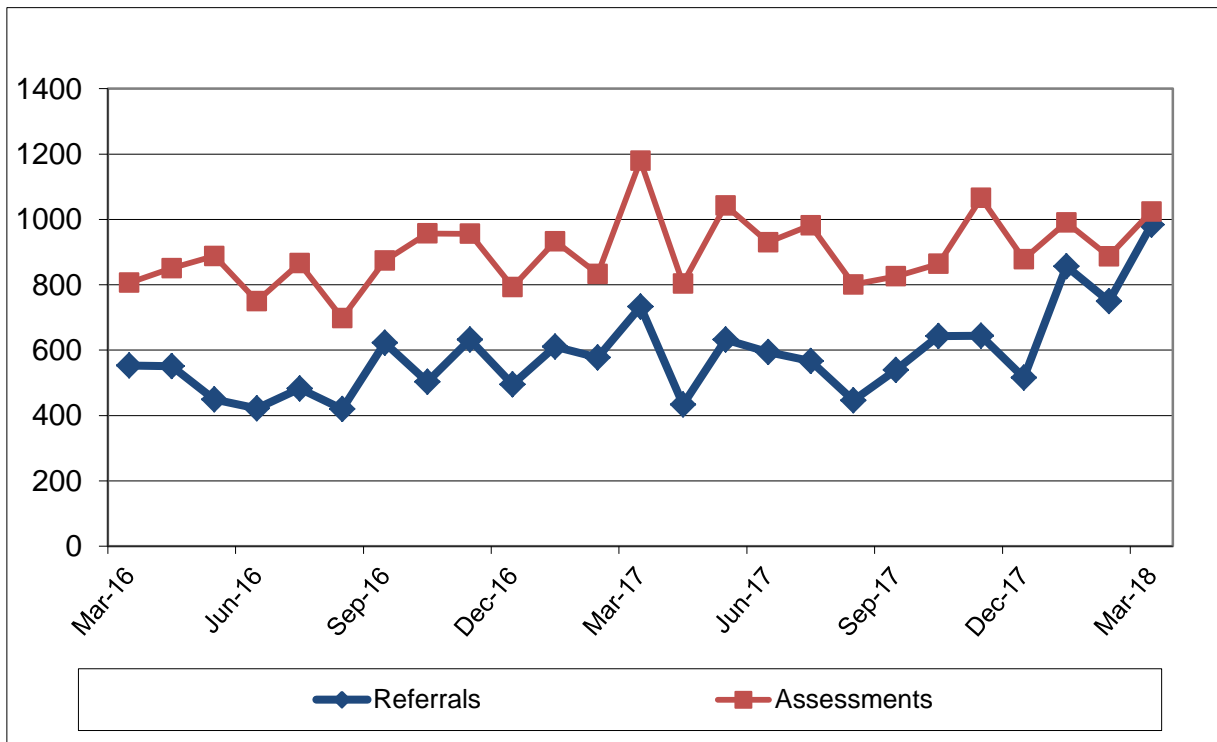
2.4 Children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan in the year, by category of abuse

**2.5 – Number of Looked after Children
(March 2016 to March 2018)**



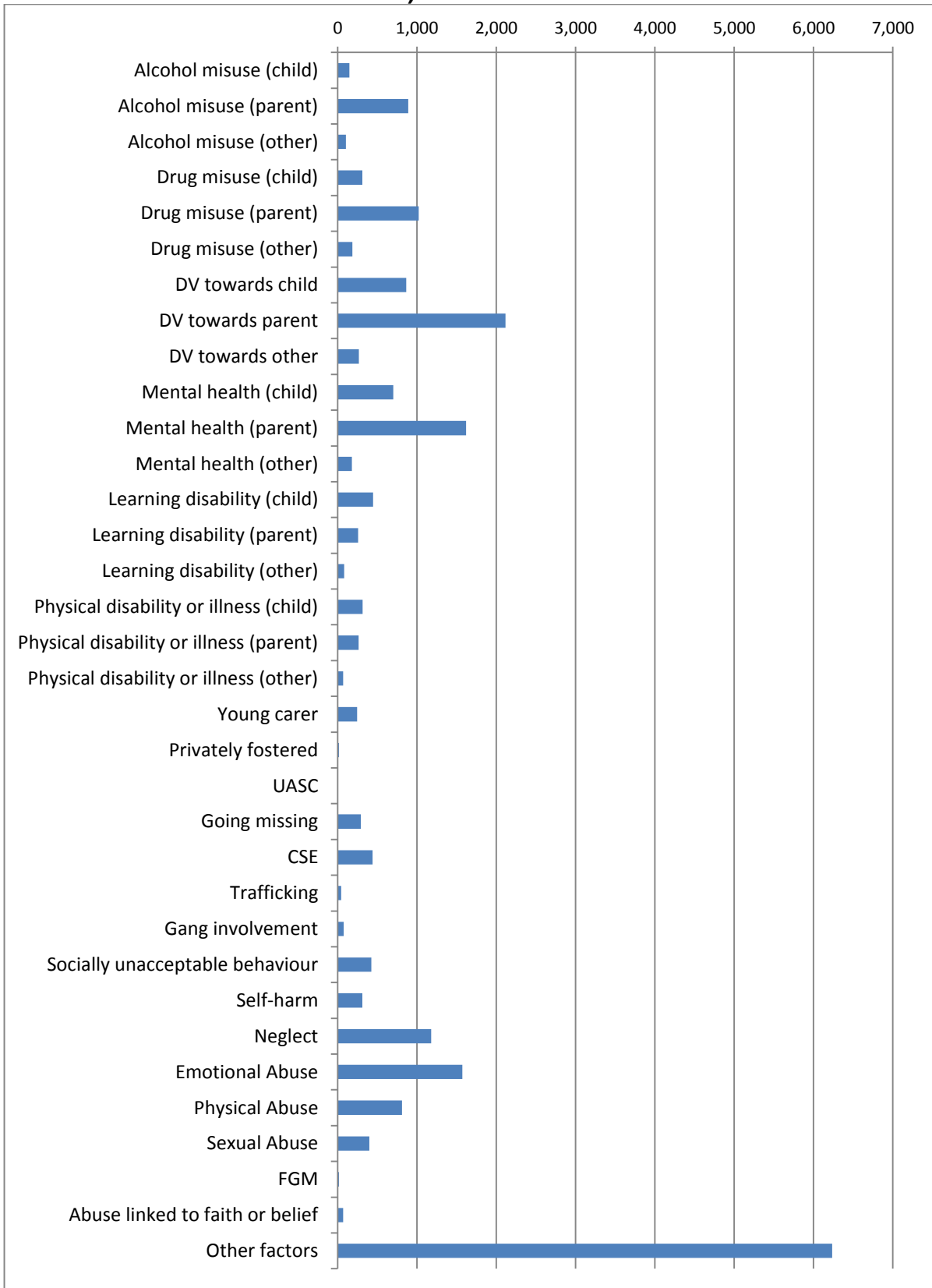
2.5 Number of Looked After Children

**2.6 – Referral and Assessment Activity
(March 2016 to March 2018)**

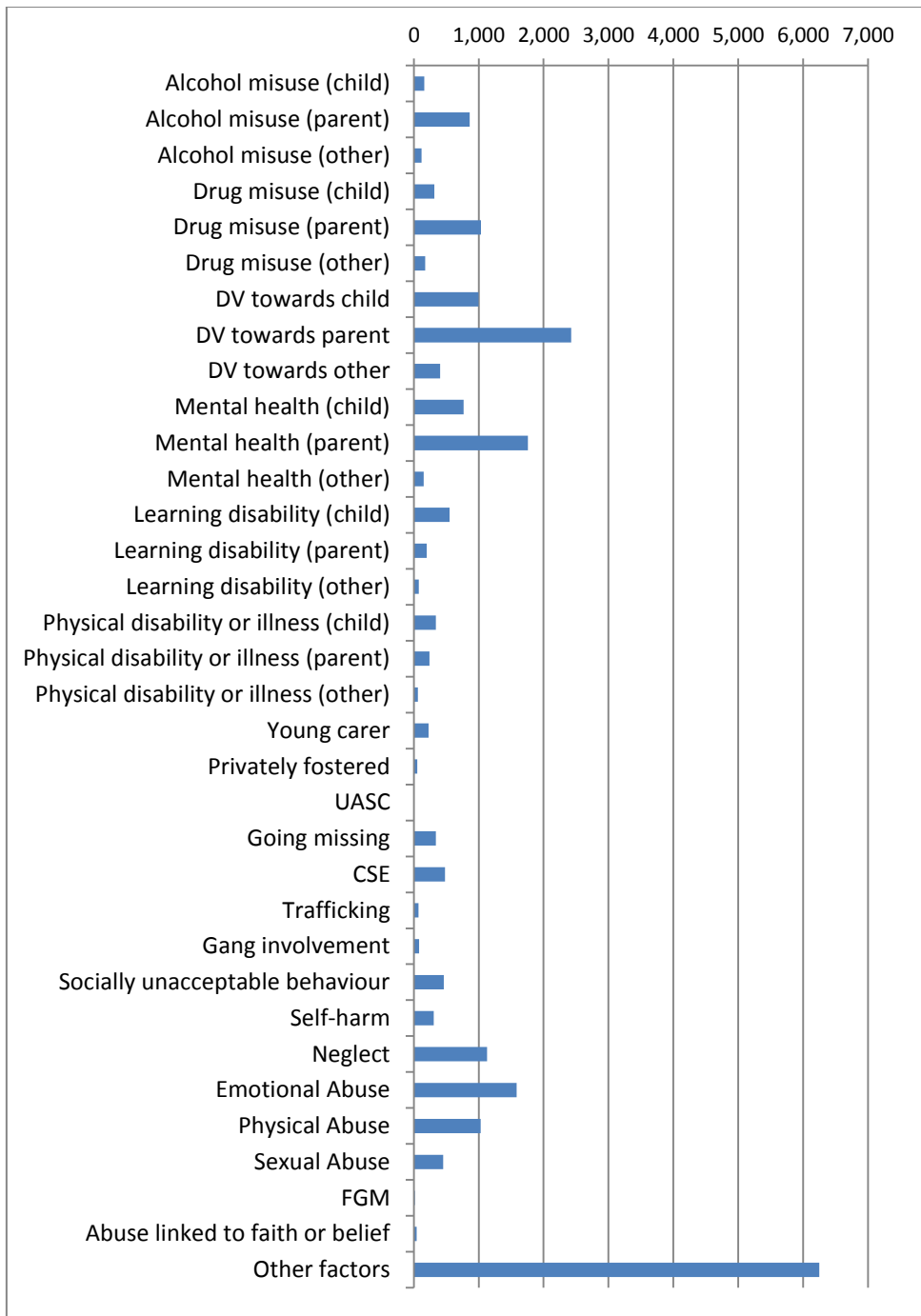


2.6 Numbers of Referrals received and Assessments completed each month

**2.7 – Factors of Need Identified by Assessments
(Financial Years 2016-17 and 2017-18)**







2.7 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2016-17



2.8 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2017-18

Appendix 3: Sickness Absence

Dept/ Service	Section	Sub-Section(s)	Number of staff at end of Mar 17	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Jan 2017 - 31 Mar 2017	Number of staff at end of Mar 18	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Jan 2018 - 31 Mar 2018	Performance compared with previous year Arrow up = improvement Arrow down = decline
Children's Specialist Services			758.54	4.61	711.06	4.56	
	Targeted Early Help	-Early Help District -Early Help Clusters -Families First co-ordination -Youth Offending	170.19	4.91	165.79	4.04	
	Prevention & Resources	-Fostering -Children's Homes -Disabilities & Complex Needs -Through Care	374.32	4.73	348.48	4.94	
	Social Work Services	-Front Door -Assessment Teams -Child and Family Teams	213.03	4.15	195.78	4.36	
Performance, Commissioning & Partnerships	Child Protection	-Safeguarding Administration -Reviewing Team	44.74	0.64	32.78	0.87	