

Report of the Interim Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 12th December 2018

Subject:

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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 2018.

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Portfolio:
Children & 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 30th September 2018. This report examines any changes in workload and demand on resources since the last report to the end of July 2018.

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 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 In September 2018, Ofsted held an unannounced inspection under the new "ILACS" (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) framework. This inspection judged that: *the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection was inadequate; the experience and progress of children in care and care leavers requires improvement to be good and the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families also requires improvement. The grading for overall effectiveness was also inadequate* (and has to be because the judgement for children in need of help and protection was inadequate). This outcome was deeply disappointing and concerning to everyone involved, the whole staff team throughout Bradford children services are committed to improving the quality of social work, care and protection afforded to our most vulnerable children and young people. An Improvement Board has been established and a detailed Improvement Plan has been implemented to start this work.
- 2.5 Ofsted found that the quality of social work services had deteriorated rapidly since the JTAI in April 2017 and that the major contributory factor was "the increase in demand for services at the same time as the loss of a significant number of experienced social workers and managers, who left to work for other authorities".
- 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. Additionally the workload report does non include non case holding social workers which include some social workers within the MASH, Early Help Gateway, placement support, fostering, court consultancy and our Emergency Duty Team.
- 2.8 There are 290 Social Workers employed by children’s services of which 143 Social Workers (132 full time equivalents) are located in Locality Child and Family or Assessment Teams (including agency workers). In addition there are 32 Community Resource Workers (CRWs) (27 full time equivalents) across the service (mainly in Through Care service)
- 2.9 At 30th September 2018 there were 33 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:

10 - under 3 months
20 - 3 to 5 months
2 - 6 to 11 months
1 - 12 months or more

44% of Bradford’s Social Workers (including agency workers) are experienced social workers with high levels of experience and training. This percentage is the same as it was in September 2017. 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. We currently have 71 newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs or ASYE in their first year of practice) across the MASH, assessment teams and children, young people and family teams. This is 53.78% of the workforce. A further 11 are due to start following the last recruitment taking the total to 82 (62.12%). All agency workers are experienced Social Workers and when replaced are likely to be replaced predominately by NQSWs. Some of the Child and Family teams are significantly made up of NQSWs with 1 or 2 experienced social workers; this is a challenge in terms of allocating cases, as these workers cannot hold child protection cases until they have been in post for 6 months plus. This increases the pressure on the experienced social workers in these teams.

- 2.10 The average caseload per full time equivalent (FTE) Social Worker is 19.0 cases,

an increase from 17.9 in September 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 14.2 (compared to 12.2 in September 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.

- 2.11 However, it is important to note that the pressure is currently not evenly spread across the service and this is being addressed within our Improvement Plan. Caseloads are still too high in the child and family teams in localities, who hold the complex child in need, child protection and court work. Some caseloads are over 25 (children) despite best efforts to reduce them down to a more manageable 18 children. This is partly due to well documented retention issues in these teams and the necessity to re-allocate cases having to be allocated to more experienced staff when newly qualified social workers join the team. Less experienced social workers on the ASYE programme (12 months Assessed Year in Practice) have protected caseloads of 16 children or less and should not be asked to carry complex cases in their own right.
- 2.12 The workload has also increased in these teams due to demand rising from more children being referred into the service for social work assessments and more children progressing to child protection plans and care proceedings. The workloads have continued to increase, whilst we have experienced a churn of social workers, which makes reducing caseloads very difficult. In Bradford we have continued to ensure that every case is allocated and children are not left without a social worker. It would not be good practice to move Social Workers from teams with more manageable case loads to teams where case loads are not at the levels that they should be. This is because it would mean that more children experience a change of Social Worker. Instead, Agency workers have been recruited to these teams whilst further permanent Social Workers are recruited.
- 2.13 49% of cases where a child has a child protection plan are allocated to an experienced social worker, a figure which has risen from 38% in September 2017.
- 2.14 41% of Public Law proceedings cases are allocated to an experienced social worker, a reduction from 55% in September 2017. The average number of Public Law cases per FTE Social Worker is 2.9, the same number as in September 2017.
- 2.15 In respect of Looked After Children held in our Through care Teams, 47% are held by an experienced social worker. The average number of LAC cases held Through care Social workers is 18.1
- 2.16 In summary, there has been increasing demand across much of Social Care over the past 12 months. This includes an increase in referrals, assessments and an increase in the number of care proceedings. An analysis of the first 100 children becoming Looked After in 2018 demonstrated that 15% were of CEE backgrounds and 38% half were not born in Bradford (either newly arrived communities or families that had relocated to Bradford for a variety of reasons). We are working hard with our partners to better manage demand and try, wherever possible, to support children and families without the need for statutory services.

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

Child Protection

- 2.17 The overall trend in the numbers of children who are the subject of a child protection plan has increased over the last year. There were 654 at 30th September 2018 compared to 561 in September 2017. The numbers of children who became the subject of a plan has risen, with 724 plans starting in the year to September 2018 compared to 642 in the year to September 2017. The numbers of children's plans ending has increased although less sharply, with 610 plans closed in the year to September 2018 compared to 588 in the year to September 2017.
- 2.18 The proportions of children subject to plans under each category at 30th September 2018 are: Physical abuse 17%; sexual abuse 8%; emotional abuse 48%; neglect 27%. The proportions subject to physical or abuse have risen in the last year while the proportion subject to neglect has fallen. Quality assurance through 'challenge panels' indicates that reasons for a child requiring a child protection plan are accurately and consistently recorded.
- 2.19 The numbers of children subject to child protection plans within Bradford is slightly higher than regional and national averages. The current rate of children subject to a child protection plan is 46.2 per 10,000 child population (at 30th September 2018) whereas the most recent published national rate is 45.3 per 10,000 and the regional average is 46.1 per 10,000 (at 31st March 2018)
- 2.20 During the year to 30th September 2018, 8.0% 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 7.5%. 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.
- 2.21 The percentage of Child Protection Plans lasting for 2 years has increased slightly over the last year, with 3.6% in the year to 30th September 2018; this compares to 3.0% in the year to September 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.
- 2.22 All children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan have an allocated Social Worker.

(Refer to Appendices 2.1 – 2.4)

- 2.23 As at 30th September 2018 there were 377 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 through 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 which includes reviews at a daily meeting.

Looked After Children

- 2.24 The number of looked after children has seen a sharp rise in the last 18 months. The number of children being looked after is 1018 at 30th September 2018 – significantly higher than the figure of 952 in September 2017. This equates to 71.9 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).
- 2.25 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 26 adoptions and 12 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in the year to September 2018, compared to 38 adoptions and 25 SGOs in the year to September 2017. 294 Looked After Children are in Family & Friends foster placements, more than the 235 in September 2017; there are on-going Allowances being paid to families for 327 children on an SGO who were previously Looked After.
- 2.26 The long term stability of Looked After Children has fallen in the last year. 61.7% 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 70.5% the previous year). This is slightly lower than the most recently published national average of 70% (March 2017).
- 2.27 All Looked After Children have an allocated qualified social worker.
- 2.28 The number of children subject to Public Law Care Proceedings cases has risen over the past 12 months. At 30th September 2018 there were 181 cases in Public Law Care Proceedings (there were 166 at September 2017). The speed of PLO decision making has also improved significantly.
- 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.
- 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 approximately 710 per month over the last year, compared to about 560 per month for the year before.
- 2.33 The number of assessments being undertaken by Social Workers is also high. About 950 assessments are carried out each month (this includes regular review 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 4,078 children's cases open as at 30th September 2018.

Workforce Development

- 2.36 Our social work recruitment takes place bi monthly; The Principal Social Worker (PSW) is leading on this and has established a more streamlined process in order to prevent a delay in candidates starting with the authority. Between January 2018 and November 2018 we have had 41 qualified social workers leave the service with 58 social workers starting in post. The majority of the leavers were experienced social workers (level 3 with at least 2.5 years experience). Of the new starters, 4 were experienced social workers (level 3 with at least 2.5 years experience), 4 were social workers (level 2 with at least a year plus experience); the remaining 33 new starters were Newly Qualified Social Workers (in their first year of practice). We currently have a further 13 qualified social workers due to start from the 3rd December 2018 onwards; of these 1 is an experienced social worker (2.5 years plus experience), 2 are social workers (at least a year plus experience and the remaining 10 are Newly Qualified Social Workers. Once in post the total of new starters from January 2018 is 71. The next recruitment is in December and there are currently 3.5 vacancies with some maternity leaves to cover also. However, Social workers continue to leave the service; the PSW is undertaking exit interviews in order to understand this.
- 2.37 It remains a challenge to recruit more experienced social work staff; there is currently an imbalance in the Assessment and Child and Family Teams between

experienced social workers and Newly Qualified Social Workers which impacts on case loads. We are working on initiatives to improve staff retention, which include ensuring manageable caseloads, regular good supervision, a strong ASYE programme (Assessed and Supported Year in Education – the programme for our Newly Qualified Social Workers) and a review of the continual professional development opportunities and career prospects for our Social Workers.

- 2.38 A retention allowance (reviewable annually) has been brought in for the Multi-Agency Service Hub (MASH), Assessment and Child and Family Teams. This brings Bradford's pay scales in line with Calderdale but they remain below most other Local Authority Neighbours.
- 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 250 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 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.

7.8 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:

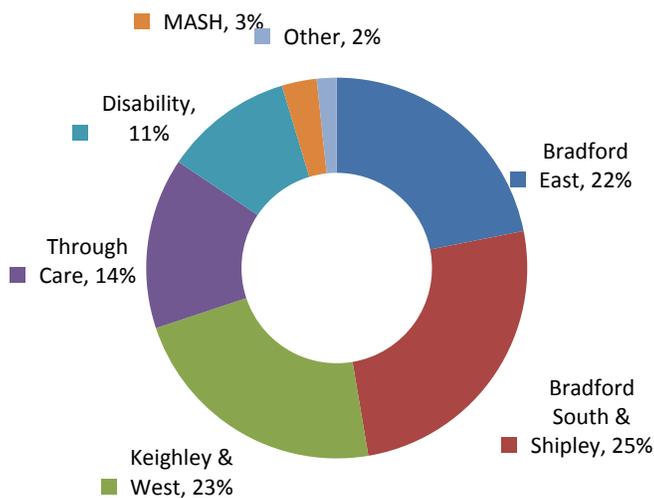
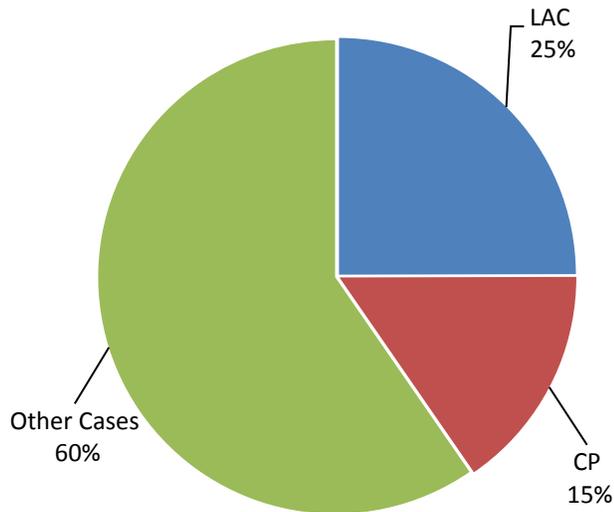
a) Workforce/Workload Analysis

		30th Sept 2017	31st Dec 2017	31st Mar 2018	30th June 2018	30th Sept 2018
Workforce Profile	Total number of directly employed Social Workers in post	182 170 FTEs	180 169 FTEs	182 171 FTEs	159 148 FTEs	142 132 FTEs
	Total number of directly employed Experienced (Level 3) Social Workers	76 71 FTEs	69 65 FTEs	62 58 FTEs	51 46 FTEs	43 39 FTEs
	Agency Social Workers	9 (5.0% of all SWs)	12 (6.6% of all SWs)	19 (10.0% of all SWs)	32 (17.8% of all SWs)	33 (20.0% of all SWs)
	Percentage of SWs who are at Experienced level (including agency)	44%	42%	40%	44%	44%
	Total number of directly employed Community Resource Workers (CRWs) in post	40 36 FTEs	38 34 FTEs	34 29 FTEs	29 25 FTEs	32 27 FTEs
	Agency CRWs	1 (2.7% of all CRWs)	1 (2.9% of all CRWs)	1 (3.3% of all CRWs)	1 (3.9% of all CRWs)	1 (3.5% of all CRWs)
Workload	Average number of cases per FTE Social Worker	17.9 (19.5 in Long Term Teams)	18.8 (19.3 in Long Term Teams)	19.6	19.3	19.0
	Average number of cases per FTE CRW	12.2	11.3	12.3	16.2	14.2
	Average number of LAC cases (including cases in proceedings) per FTE LAC case holding worker	8.6 (15.3 in Through Care teams)	7.7 (14.5 in Through Care teams)	8.0 (14.5 in Through Care teams)	8.9 (16.4 in Through Care teams)	10.1 (18.1 in Through Care teams)
	Average number of CP cases per FTE CP case holding worker	7.3	6.5	6.9	7.3	8.1
	Average number of cases in Public Law Care Proceedings per FTE PLCP case holding worker	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.6	2.9
Utilisation of Resources	Percentage of LAC cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	53% (479 cases)	53% (478 cases)	49% (484 cases)	47% (487 cases)	47% (480 cases)
	Percentage of cases where a child has a Child Protection Plan allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	38% (186 cases)	37% (158 cases)	42% (241 cases)	43% (253 cases)	49% (315 cases)
	Percentage of Public Law Proceedings Cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	55% (82 cases)	48% (65 cases)	55% (93 cases)	45% (85 cases)	41% (75 cases)

b) Caseload Analysis

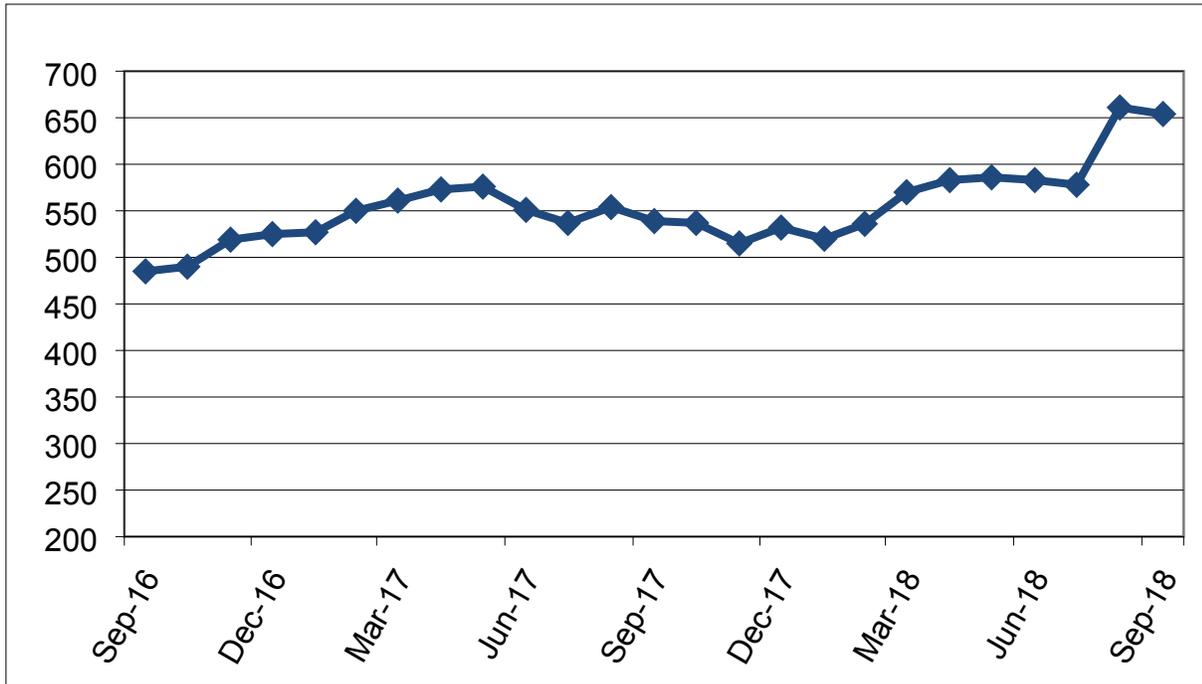
Active cases held by Social Workers and Community Resource Workers working in Care Management Teams at 30th September 2018.

Of the 4078 active cases held by Children's Social Care: 25% were looked after children (1018), 15% were children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan and not also LAC (629) and 60% were other Children in Need, including cases still undergoing assessment.



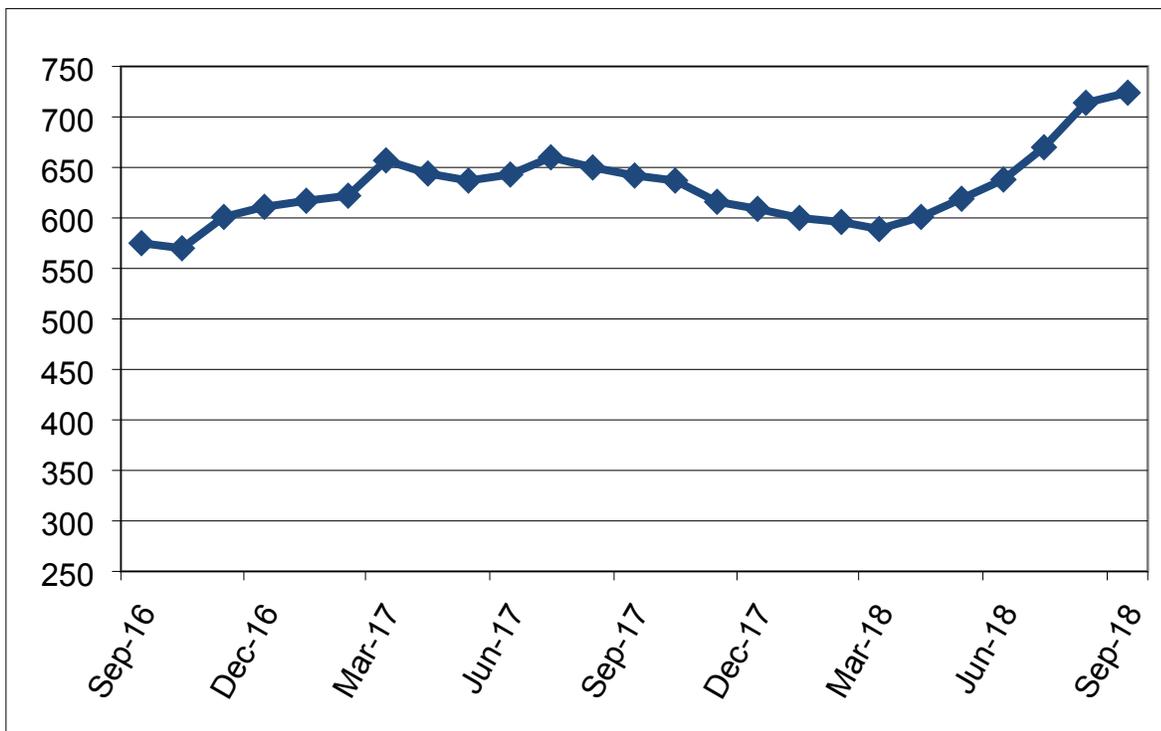
Appendix 2: Workload Pressures

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



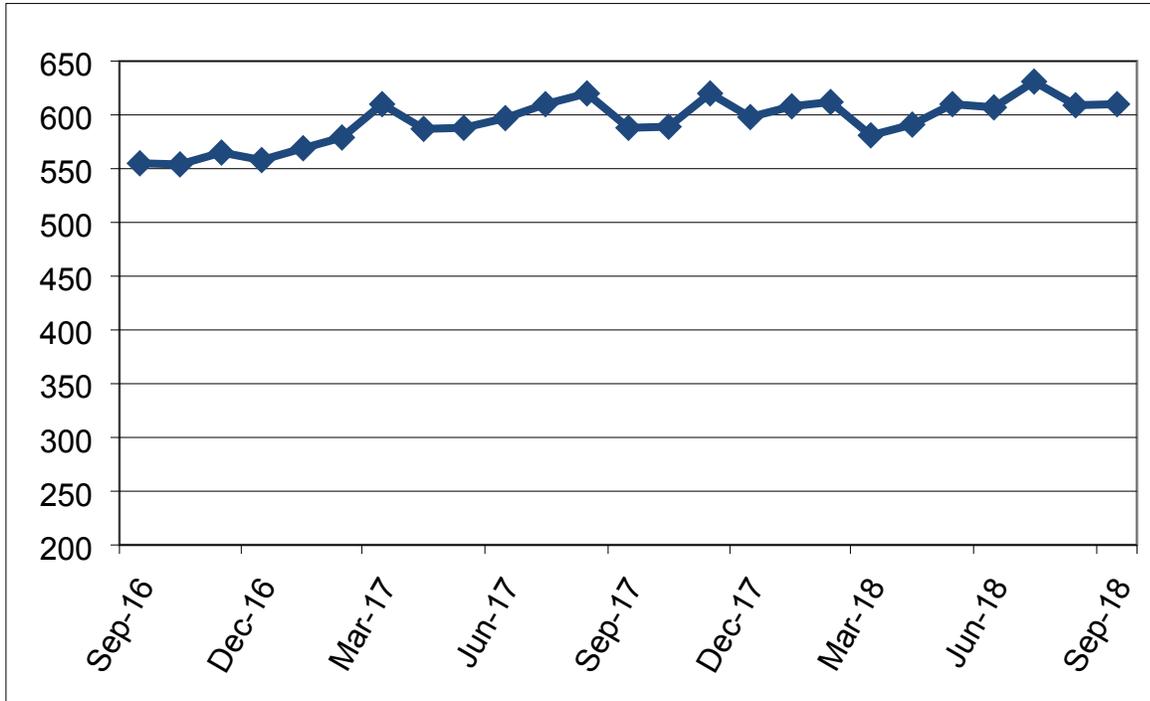
2.1 Total Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

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



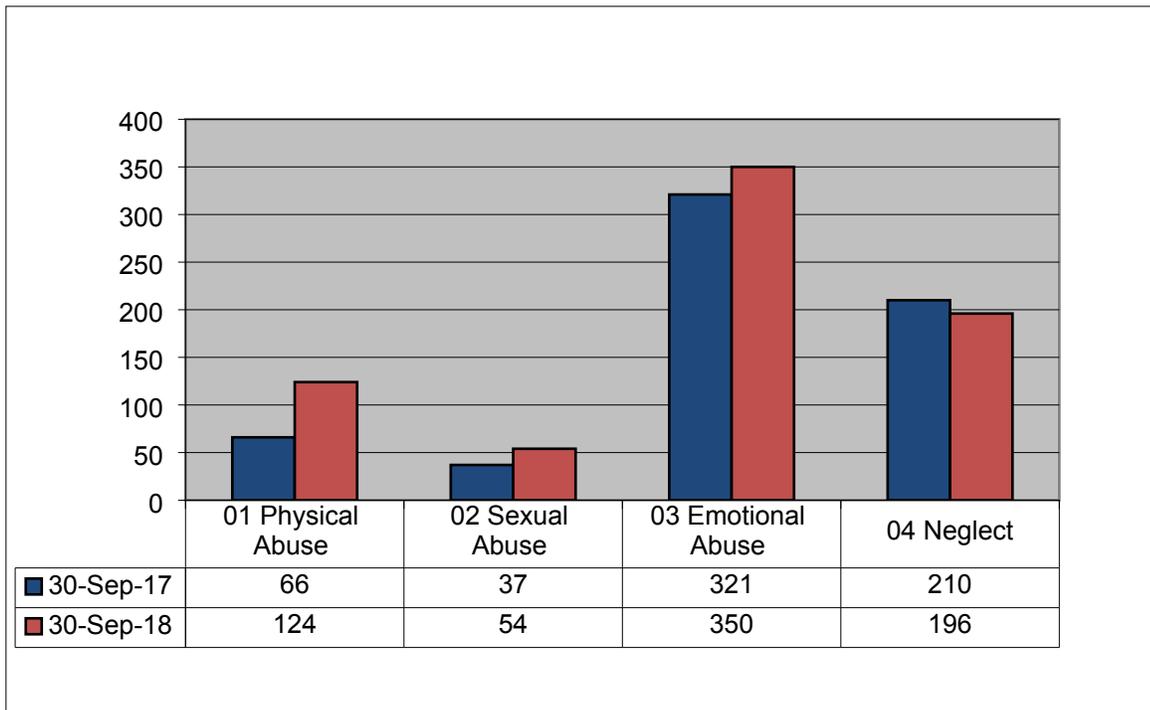
2.2 Children who became the subject of a Child Protection Plan

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



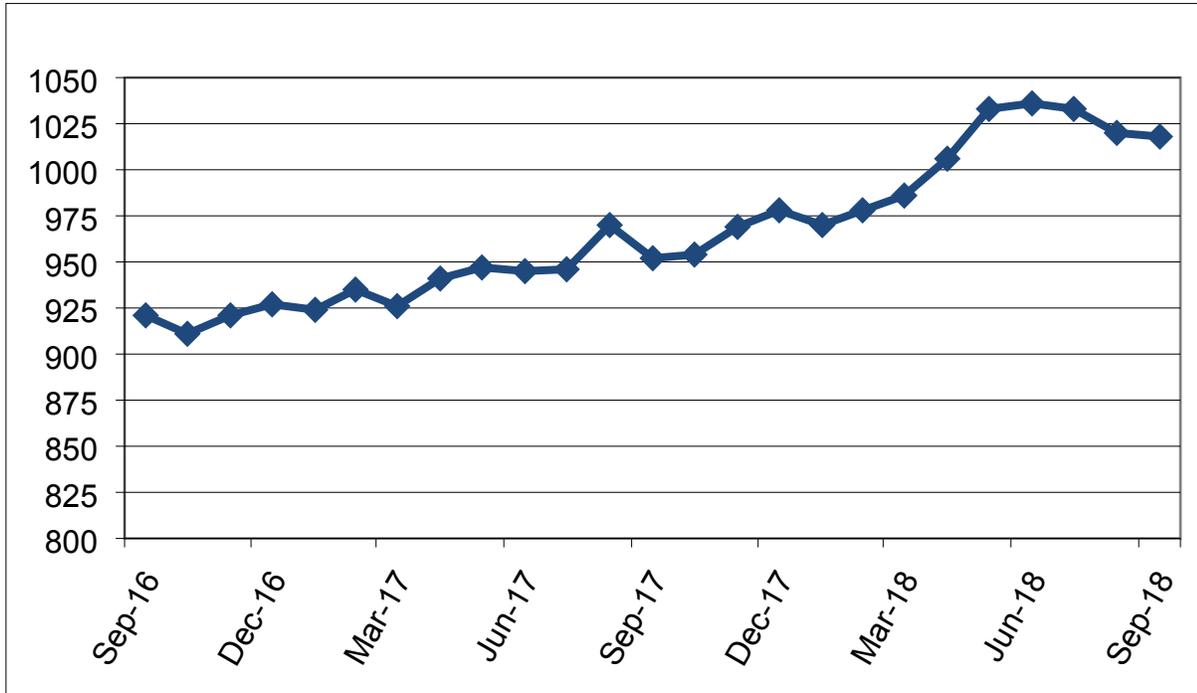
2.3 Children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan

2.4 – Number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the years ending 30th September 2017 and 2018 by category of abuse



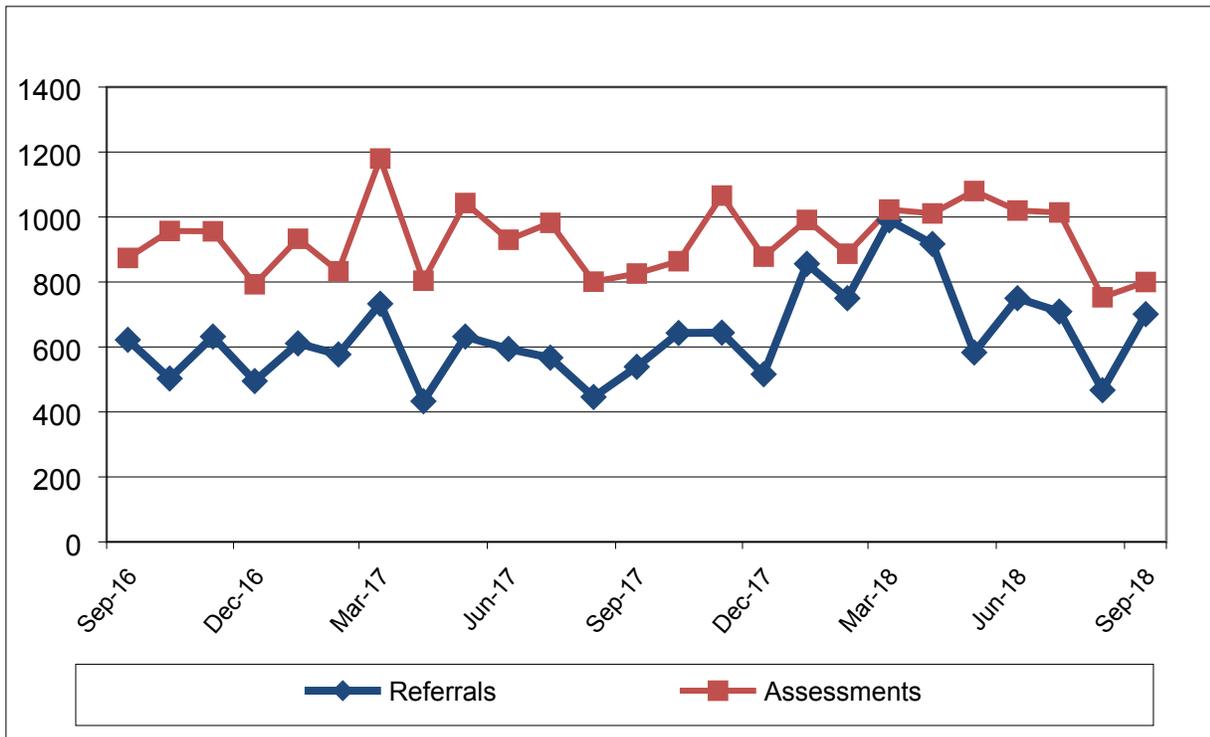
2.4 Children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan in the year, by category of abuse

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



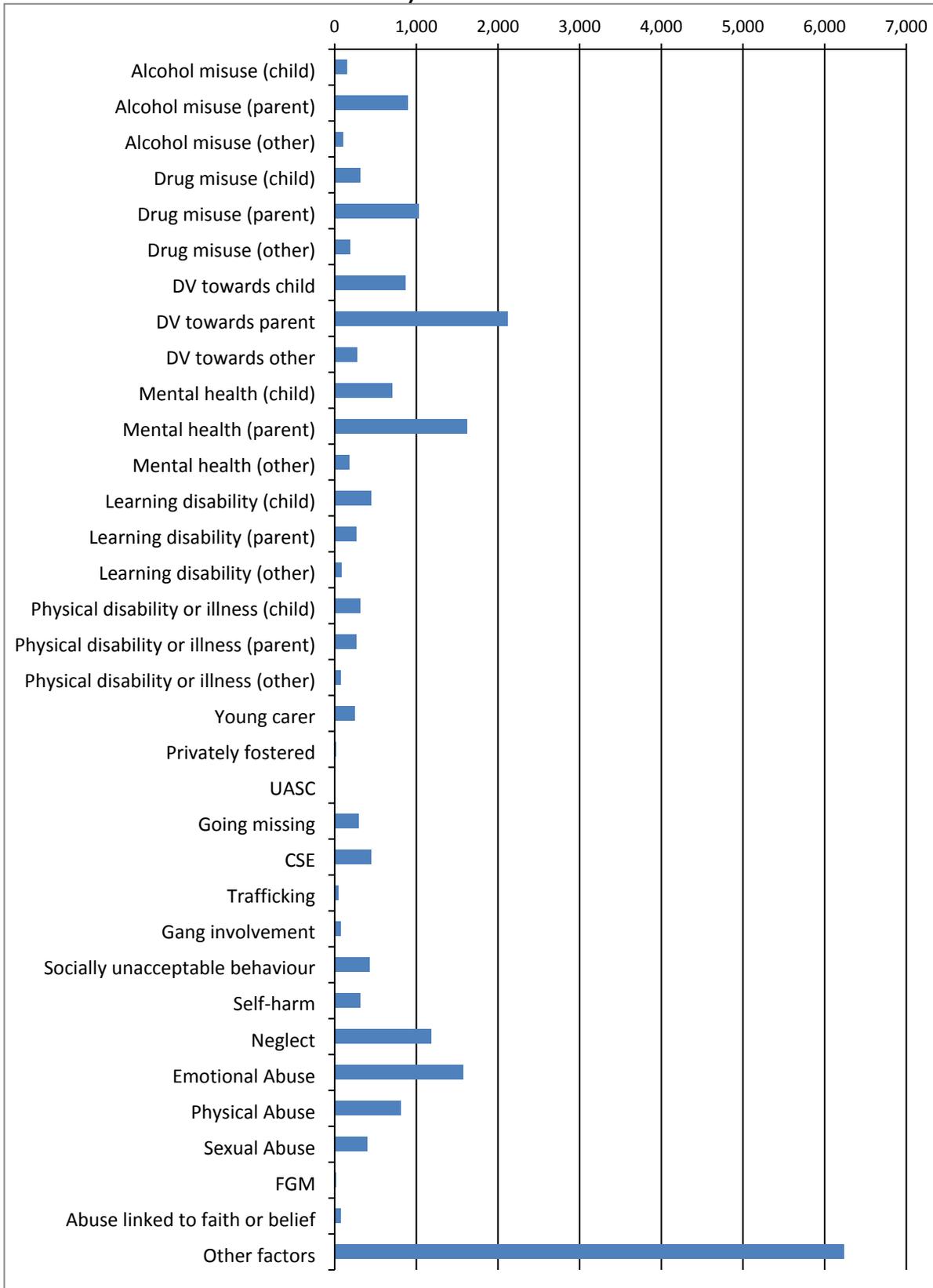
2.5 Number of Looked After Children

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

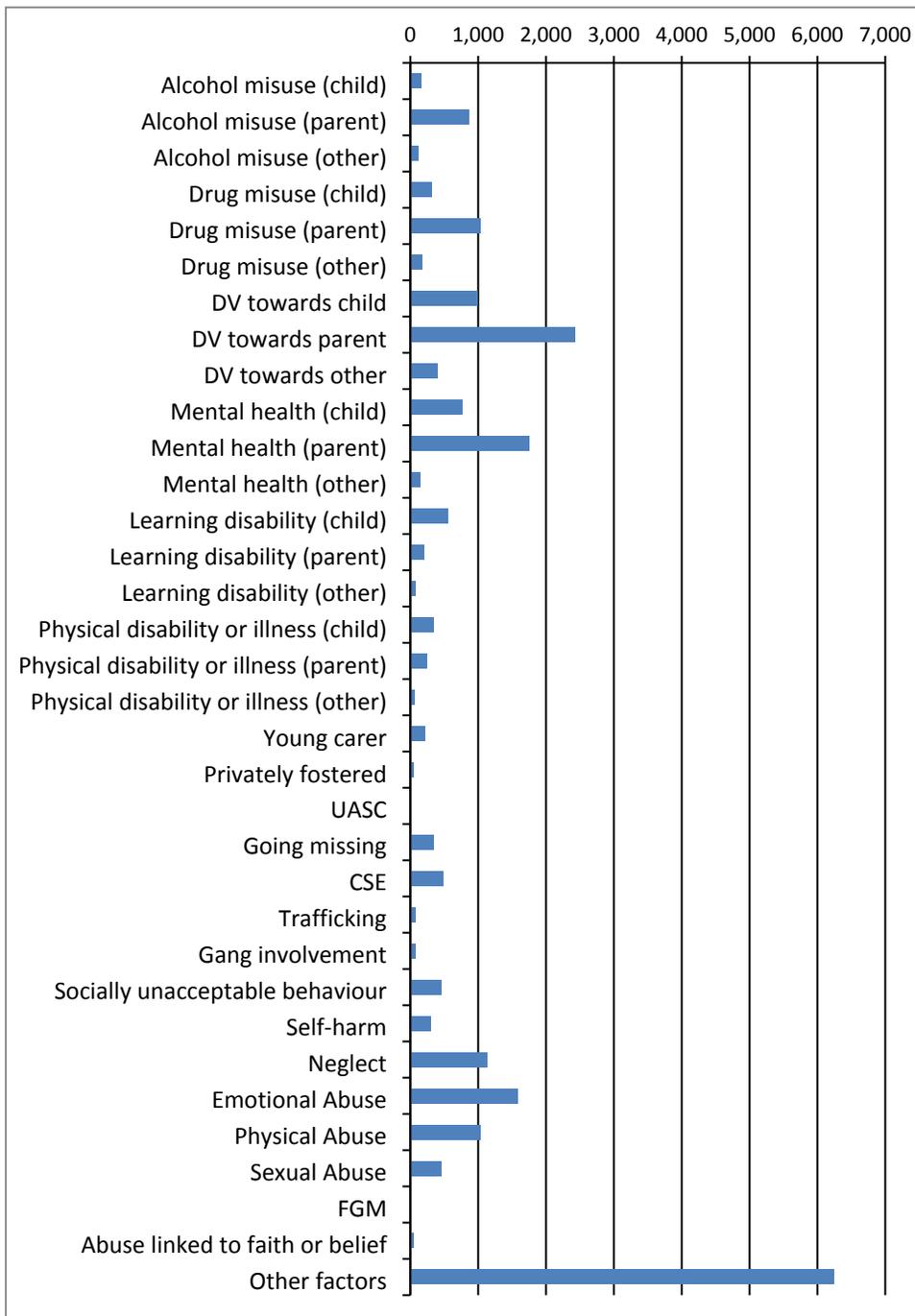


2.6 Numbers of Referrals received and Assessments completed each month

**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 FTE staff at 30 Sep 2017	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Jul 2017 - 30 Sep 2017	Number of FTE staff at 30 Sep 18	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Jul 2018 - 30 Sep 2018	Performance compared with previous year Arrow up = improvement Arrow down = decline
Children's Specialist Services			722.24	4.33	737.62	3.36	
	Targeted Early Help	-Early Help District -Early Help Clusters -Youth Offending	174.80	5.21	162.43	2.45	
	Prevention & Resources	-Fostering -Children's Homes -Disabilities & Complex Needs -Through Care	353.16	4.46	355.99	4.17	
	Social Work Services	-Front Door -Assessment Teams -Child and Family Teams	193.28	3.33	188.72	2.96	
Performance, Commissioning & Partnerships	Child Protection	-Safeguarding Administration -Reviewing Team	32.78	0.65	33.09	3.21	