

Quarterly Performance Report – Social Services for Children

Report Author Head of Social Services for Children
Report Date March 2012
Report Period Quarter 3: 1st October 2011 to 31st December 2011




Introduction

The report is produced on a quarterly basis and provided to Executive members for review and assurance and will be available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of their Forward Work Programmes.

The report consists of an overview of the key messages to highlight across all work streams in Social Services for Children, which is followed by highlights from each service area. Parts 2 and 3 of the report include an assessment of performance in the quarter from the following sources:

- Improvement Plan Monitoring
- Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges
- Performance Indicators and Outcome Measures
- Improvement Target Action Plan Monitoring
- Key Actions from Service Plan Monitoring
- Internal and external regulatory reports
- Customer satisfaction and feedback
- Awards and accreditations
- Resource Management (HR, ICT, Finance, Assets)

RAG Status

RED equates to a position of under-performance, downward trend, non-achievement of target, non-achievement of action milestones.	
AMBER equates to a mid position where improvement may have been made (i.e. improved trend) but the target for the year is unlikely to be reached, or where action milestones have been deferred or narrowly missed.	
GREEN equates to a position of positive trend on performance, meeting target and achieving action milestones.	

1. Foreword

Report highlights for this quarter are the following items: -

<p>Performance</p>	<p>Of the 13 improvement targets, 9 (69%) of these are allocated a green RAG status this quarter, and the other 4 are amber. A detailed analysis of the amber targets is presented in Section 3.0 of this report.</p> <p>Highlight performers for Quarter 3 include planning for permanence for looked after children (SCC/001b) which remains at 100%, timeliness of initial assessments (SCC/042a) which is maintained at 93%, and the average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (PSR/009a) for children, which has improved since Quarter 2.</p>
<p>Independent Sector</p>	<p>Refurbishing Arosfa is ongoing and it is envisaged that this should be completed by April. It is expected the new Residential Service will become operational May / June.</p>
<p>Advocacy tender</p>	<p>The tendering process for a new service provider for specialist advocacy and independent visiting is ongoing and a decision should be reached by early March.</p>
<p>Young Carers and Looked after children</p>	<p>Work is ongoing between groups of young carers and looked after children, resulting in the development of the ID card for young carers, looked after children and care leavers. The ID card was to be launched on the 4th April, but has had to be postponed on Peter Evans' advice due to the local government elections and Purdah.</p>
<p>Supervised contact arrangements</p>	<p>The external evaluation of Supervised Contact Arrangements has been completed, and an action plan is to be formulated in response.</p>
<p>Transition</p>	<p>The structure of the new Transition Team has been approved and is on target for implementation.</p>
<p>Integrated Family Support Services</p>	<p>The bid for SMAT funding to backfill posts to allow our staff to spend time with the IFFS Team in Wrexham was supported. This activity will inform our plans for the rollout of IFSS.</p>

Other highlights by service area are as follows: -

<p>Youth Justice Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful bid has been agreed to develop a Dual Diagnosis Service for those young people with substance misuse and mental health related problems. This is currently being developed with Flintshire CAMHs. • Volunteer Mentor Support Scheme is being developed to support young people across the range of YJS activities including enhancing support available as part of Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) / Detention
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	<p>Training Order (DTO) exit strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open College Network (OCN) qualifications are currently being developed within the service and integrated across a range of YJS activities and to be delivered primarily by case managers and targeted support staff with direct support from a dedicated OCN assessor based within the Service.
Families First	<p>The Families First Plan was submitted to WG by the deadline of 31st October 2011. WG gave conditional approval on the 2nd December 2011. The conditional approval gave consent to develop a commissioning strategy for Families First by 31st March 2012.</p> <p>During Quarter 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quest continued to offer services to parents to assist in the development of their confidence and to enable them to start the journey towards training/employment.• Team Around the Family delivered multi-agency training to raise awareness about when to refer families to the Team Around the Family. Each person who attended training has been given a toolkit to assist them in referring families on to appropriate services.• Family Information Service have improved access to their service by working collaboratively with Wrexham and Denbighshire to engage employers in making low paid employees aware of information about Tax Credits and how they can access advice and guidance from CAB and Welfare Rights.• CAB and Welfare Benefits Unit continue to provide advice to families who have financial issues such as debt, need access to housing, finance etc.

2. Performance Summary

2.1 Improvement Plan Monitoring





Council Priority	Target Date	Progress RAG	Outcome RAG	Commentary
5.0 To make our communities safe and to safeguard the vulnerable, with children and older people being priority groups.				
5.1.1 Develop robust commissioning arrangements for out of county placements.	March 2012	A	G	See Section 3.1
5.3 Further raise awareness and monitor safeguarding activity through the joint (with Wrexham) LSCB.	December 2012	G	G	
5.5 Implement the Integrated Family Support Services initiative (also 7).	June 2011	G	G	
6.0 To protect and grow the local and regional economy, to be a prosperous County and to provide help and support for those vulnerable to poverty.				
6.9 Implement the Families First initiative (also 5).	March 2012	G	G	
7.0 To promote independent, healthy and fulfilled living in the community with the highest quality personalised and supportive social and health care services.				
7.3 Develop a range of temporary accommodation and independent living options for care leavers (also 8).	December 2011	G	G	

2.2 Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARC)





The table below summarises the position of SARCs at the end of the reporting period.

Commentary is included in section 3 for those SARCS: -

- that are showing a Red RAG status
- where the RAG status has changed since the last reporting period
- where the Green Predictive Date has changed since the last reporting period
- where there has been considerable change or additions of secondary risks and activity

SARC – CD23 Procurement of Independent Sector Placements for Looked After Children	Previous RAG Status	Current RAG Status	Green Predictive
Increase the choice and diversity of FCC foster placements to help to reduce the need to procure placements from the independent sector.			April 2012
Increase the availability of in-county residential short break care for children with a disability to help meet unmet need and reduce			June 2012

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the need to procure out-of-county placements from the independent sector.			
Improve the mechanisms for procuring and managing independent sector placements to ensure that looked after children are appropriately placed and best value is achieved.			June 2012
Improve the effectiveness of social care interventions designed to rehabilitate children with their families and/or appropriately return them to an in-county placement from an emergency out-of-county placement			March 2012

2.3.1 Performance Indicators and Outcome Measures


The status of the indicators are summarised for this quarter below:







Graphs and commentary are included section 3 for those indicators shown with a RAG status of either Amber or Red. An asterisk (*) indicates that the indicator is an *improvement target*.

Indicator	Annual Target	Previous Quarter Outturn	Current Quarter Target	Current Quarter Outturn	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned
*SCC/042a The percentage of initial assessments completed within 7 working days.	89%	93.1%	89%	93.7%		Improved
*SCC/042b The average time taken to complete initial assessments that took longer than 7 working days.	Below 10.5 days	22.1 days	Below 10.5 days	13.8 days		Improved (See Section 3.2)
*SCC/028 The percentage of Looked After Children who had a fully completed and updated	70%	-	70%	66.7%		None due in Q2 but Improved on 2010/11 (See Section 3.2)



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Assessment and Progress Record at their third review.						
*SCC/039 The percentage of health assessments for Looked after Children due in the year that have been undertaken.	75%	57.1%	75%	72.6%		Improved (See Section 3.2)
HTH/001 The percentage of Health Assessments appointments requested within timescales.	Not set	85.7	Not set	91.9%	No target	Improved (See Section 3.2)
*SCC/030a The percentage of young carers known to social services who were assessed.	80%	100%	80%	100%		Maintained
YC/001 The percentage of young carers identified in the period who were offered a Young Carer's Assessment.	90%	100%	90%	100%		Maintained
*SCC/030b The percentage of young carers known to social services who were provided with a service.	80%	100%	80%	100%		Maintained
*SCC/025 The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations.	93%	74.5%	93%	77.8%		Improved (See Section 3.2)

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<p>*SCC/016 The percentage of reviews of child plans for children in need carried out in accordance with the statutory timetable.</p>	70%	89.4%	70%	88.1%		Maintained
<p>*SCC/001b For those children looked after whose second review (due at 4 months) was due in the year, the percentage with a plan for permanence in place.</p>	100%	100%	100%	100%		Maintained
<p>*SCC/024 The percentage of children looked after during the year with a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school.</p>	80%	66.7%	80%	-		None due in Q3
<p>*SCC/033c The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact, who are known to be engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19.</p>	75%	100%	75%	80%		Downturned but still better than 2010/11
<p>*PSR009a The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).</p>	350 days	383 days	350 days	293 days		Improved

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<p>*PSR006 Timing of low cost adaptations not funded by a Disabled Facilities Grant (Childrens cases only).</p>	88 days	119 days	88 days	-		No completions in Q3
<p>SCY/001a The percentage change in the average number of hours of suitable education, training or employment children and young people receive while within the youth justice system by children and young people of statutory school age</p>	6%	59.5%	6%	32.3%		Downturned (See Section 3.2)

2.3.2 Improvement Target Action Plan Monitoring

Ref	Action & Planned Completion date	Progress
*SCC/042a	Because of the delays experienced with the electronic management authorisation of assessments, it has been agreed that Social Workers will now sign off their own assessments, with managerial oversight provided at the point of transfer or closure. The Performance Team will continue to flag up unauthorised assessments.	C
*SCC/042b	Because of the delays experienced with the electronic management authorisation of assessments, it has been agreed that Social Workers will now sign off their own assessments, with managerial oversight provided at the point of transfer or closure. The Performance Team will continue to flag up unauthorised assessments.	C
*SCC/028	Members considered the issues around this PI, including the length and complexity of the paperwork required and the very low All Wales average for this indicator, and recommended that the target should be reclassified to incremental at the next target setting event.	C
*SCC/039	A process of continuous scrutiny and overview remain central to our internal activities. As noted in previous action plans we remain limited in our response to Health activities and deadlines. We continue to have a dialogue with Health Representatives both in the North Wales area and other Health	C

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	colleagues when children are placed out of county about time frames and standards.	
	Notifications of new placements are being sent by the Performance Team to the LAC Nurse to speed up the booking process.	C
	Development of a new local PI to capture appointments requested within timescales.	C
*SCC/030a	Multi-agency young carers strategy and action plan developed.	C
	Work to begin to making existing internal young carers assessment consistent with Barnardo's own assessment.	✓
	Joint protocol to be strengthened using ADASS / ADCS report.	✗ (see Section 3.3)
	Young carers Professionals Pack to include 'Think Family' focus.	✗ (see Section 3.3)
	Continue to monitor the local performance indicator which measures how good we are at offering young carers assessments to children identified as having a caring role.	C
*SCC/030b	Actions as above.	
*SCC/025	The Team Manager of the Permanency Team (CYAST) has been notified of the remedial work that needs to be completed in order that the visit records are brought up to date. Additional capacity provided within the team will ensure that visits are recorded promptly in order to be counted within the PI.	✓
*SCC/016	The flagging system for notifying social workers of the due dates for forthcoming reviews has enabled them to prioritise their workload and meet the required timescales more effectively. It is envisaged that this system will eventually be replaced by a Team Managers operational report within Paris, which will enable them to monitor performance within their own teams on an ongoing basis. This is being developed as part of the Flintshire/Denbighshire Paris collaboration project.	✓
*SCC/001b	We have experienced a lack of consistency between managers in the interpretation of what constitutes a plan for permanency for a looked after child. The complication is around children who are in court proceedings for whom a permanency plan cannot be finalised until the judge has made a decision, which may not be within 4 months of the child coming into care. Discussions have taken place with other authorities around the definition of a plan for permanence and a Flintshire definition has been agreed.	C

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*SCC/024	An All Wales PEP is currently being developed (through the revision of the Education of LAC guidance); the draft document is even more lengthy than our version. We are unsure whether we will be required to use the All Wales version once this is released – we are awaiting advice from Lifelong Learning.	✓
	Amend the Care Procedures Manual to the effect that when a child comes into care or changes school, a notification is sent from the social worker to the IRO and the Performance Team so that the need for a PEP can be logged and chased.	C
	LACE coordinator to contact staff in Permanency Team (CYAST) to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities around meeting with school staff and completing the PEP within the timescales.	C
*SCC/033c	Last year care leavers were able to take advantage of the Flintshire Skill Build project to improve their potential to access either education or work based training placements. Flintshire are currently in talks with neighbouring authorities to explore whether this project can be extended.	✓
*PSR009a	Actions are included in the Social Services for Adults Quarterly Performance Report.	
*PSR006	Actions are included in the Social Services for Adults Quarterly Performance Report.	

2.4 Key Actions from Service Plan Monitoring and ACRF

The following table shows which areas are on track and which have incurred slippage or have been subject to a revised timetable. Commentary to explain the slippage/revised timescales can be found in Section 3.3.

Improvement Area	On-track?	Commentary
Major and minor adaptations	✓	
Transition Service	✓	
Identifying and supporting young carers.	x	See Section 3.3
Supporting looked after children and care leavers	✓	
Regional collaboration	✓	
Regional integration	x	See Section 3.3
Improve safeguarding arrangements	✓	

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Develop Integrated Family Support Service	✓	
Apply LEAN principles	✓	
Welsh Language compliance	✓	
Monitor and reduce staff absence	x	See Section 3.3
Service user and carer involvement	✓	
Reduce dependency on the independent sector and improve commissioning process	✓	
Develop the Families First Initiative	✓	
Prevent offending by children and young people	✓	

2.5 Internal & External Regulatory Reports

No internal or external audit/regulatory work has been completed during the quarter.

3. Exception Reporting

3.1 Improvement Plan

5.1.1 Develop robust commissioning arrangements for out of county placements.

Robust mechanisms for procuring and managing independent sector placements will ensure that looked after children are appropriately placed and best value is achieved. In order to achieve this, changes have been made to existing processes and guidance issued regarding the new Options Appraisal forms for all future submissions to the Out of County Placement Panel.

In addition, a visit has taken place and discussions are ongoing regarding the possible purchasing of bedspaces at the Bryn Awel unit in Denbighshire. It is envisaged the outcome of these discussions will be known by the end of Quarter 4.

3.2 Improvement Targets

It is pleasing to see despite the reduced capacity in some areas of Fieldwork Services, we have been able to maintain a Green RAG status in 9 of our 13 improvement targets. There are no Red indicators this Quarter, but 4 Ambers, shown below. One indicator was not reported in Q3 as there was no relevant activity.

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SCC/042b

The average time taken to complete initial assessments that took longer than 7 working days.



SCC/028

The percentage of Looked After Children who had a fully completed and updated Assessment and Progress Record at their third review.



SCC/025

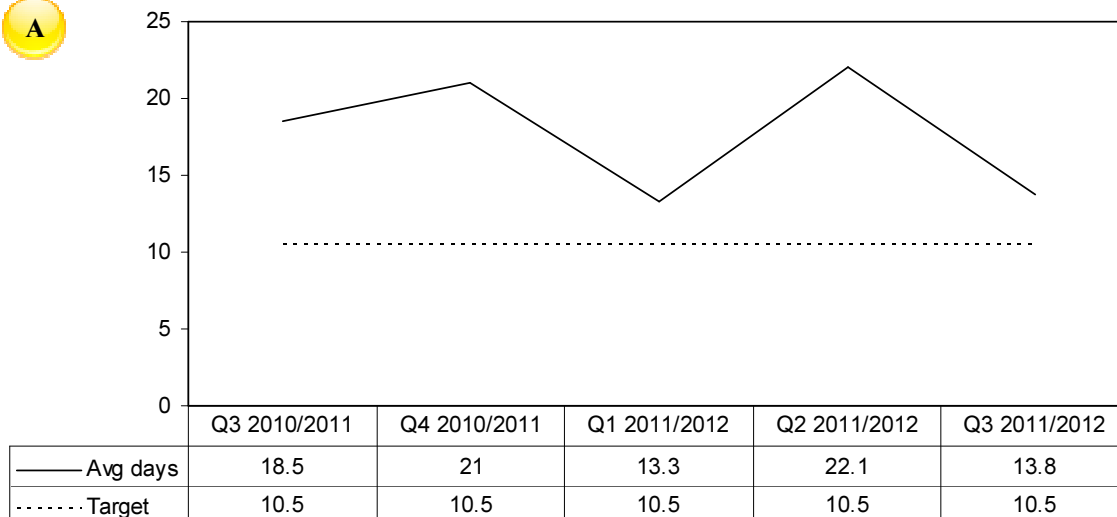
The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations.



SCC/039

The percentage of health assessments for Looked after Children due in the year that have been undertaken.

SCC/042b The average time taken to complete initial assessments that took longer than 7 working days.



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

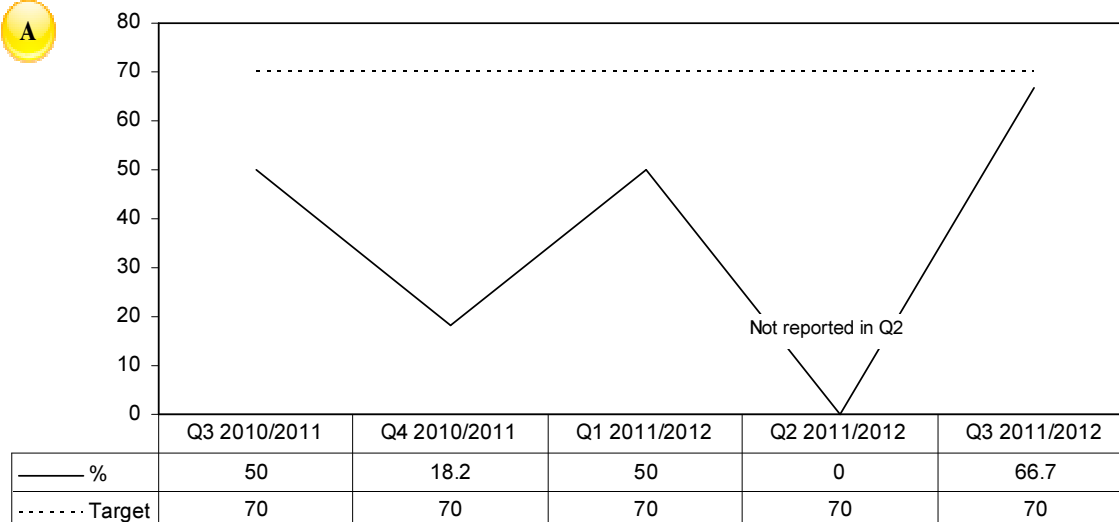
Because of the delays experienced with the electronic management authorisation of assessments, it has been agreed that Social Workers will now sign off their own assessments, with managerial oversight provided at the point of transfer or closure. This means that completed assessments can now be signed off in a timely manner. The Performance Team will continue to flag up unauthorised assessments.

However, in some cases where there is no urgent child protection need, and where the service user finds it difficult to engage with Social Services, assessments may take longer than the statutory 7 working days to complete.

In Quarter 3, five initial assessments were completed outside the statutory timescale of 7 working days. One was allocated late because of insufficient capacity in the Duty & Assessment Team to carry out the assessment. Additional temporary capacity has been provided in the team. The other four assessments were conducted at the service user's pace, the longest taking 19 days.

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SCC/028 – The percentage of Looked After Children who had a fully completed and updated Assessment and Progress Record at their third review.



A upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

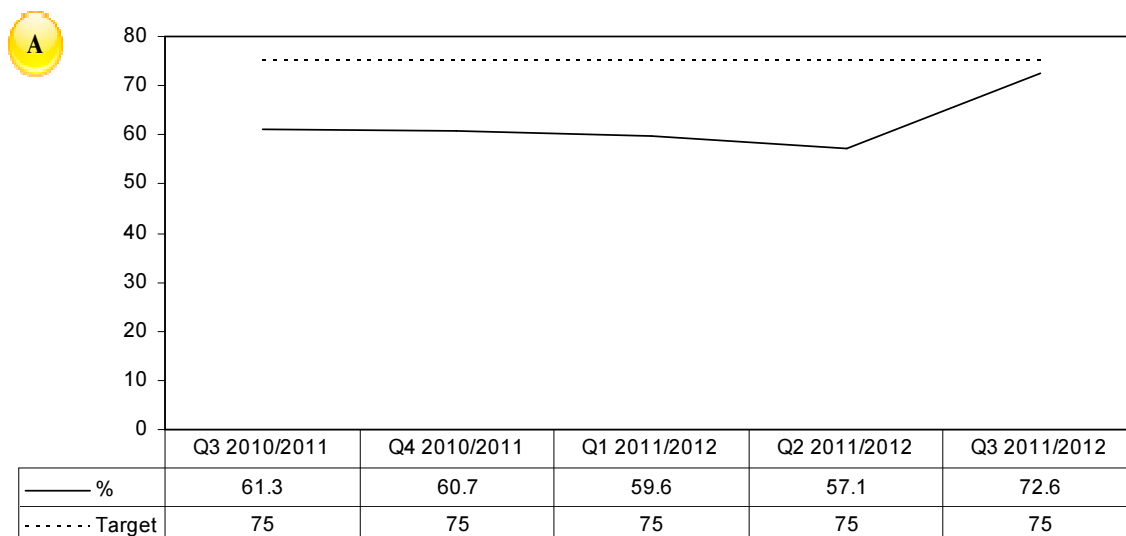
The Performance Team meet on a monthly basis with the Children and Young Adults Support Team to advise of assessments which are becoming due. However, the ICS Assessment and Progress Record is a lengthy and time-consuming document to complete, and where cases are in court proceedings, priority is given to adoption and court paperwork.

Members considered the issues around this PI, including the length and complexity of the paperwork required and the very low All Wales average for this indicator, and recommended that the target should be reclassified to incremental at the target setting event in November 2011.

In Quarter 3, three out of nine Assessment and Progress Records were completed outside the statutory timescales. In one case, work on the document was started in early January, and in the other two cases a recommendation was made by the Independent Reviewing Officer that the work should be completed by the time of the next review.

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SCC/039 – The percentage of health assessments for Looked after Children due in the year that have been undertaken.



A upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

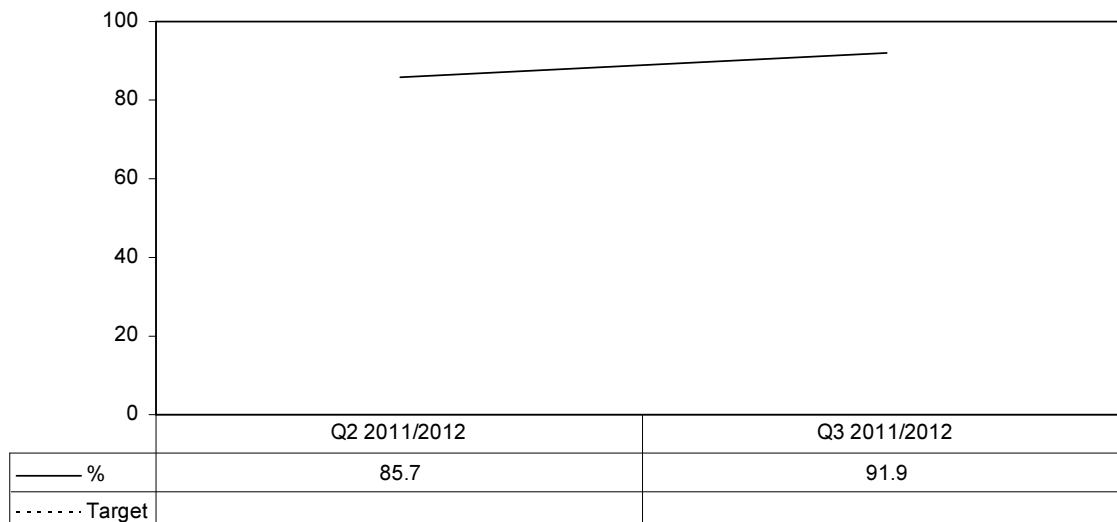
A process of continuous overview and scrutiny remain central to our internal activities. As noted in previous action plans we remain limited in our response to Health activities and deadlines. We continue to have a dialogue with Health Representatives both in the North Wales area and other Health colleagues when children are placed out of county about time frames and standards.

45 out of the 62 health assessments (72.6%) due in the quarter were undertaken within the statutory timescales. This was a good improvement on Quarter 2.

The actions to notify the LAC nurse of new placements, and to develop a new local performance indicator to capture appointments which were requested to Health within timescales, have both been completed. The performance against this local indicator is shown below:

NEW LOCAL PI HTH/001 – The percentage of Health Assessments appointments requested within timescales.

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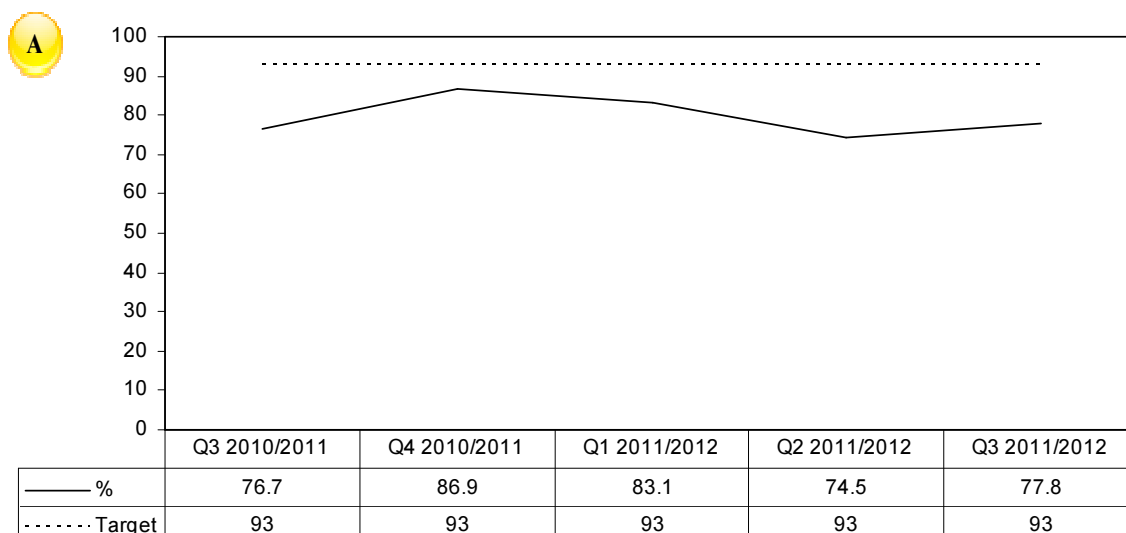


In Quarter 3, 57 out of the 62 health assessments (91.9%) that were due were requested by Social Services to Health within the statutory timescales.

All reasons for late health assessments are given below, together with the age bands of the children.

Reason Assessment not provided within timescale	0	1-4	5-9	10-15	16+
Appointment provided within timescale but family failed to attend.	1			1	3
Appointment requested late to Health by Social Worker.		4	1		
Requested within time but appointment not provided in timescales.	1	2		4	

SCC/025 – The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations.



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All Statutory visits are now required to be recorded on Paris in order to be verified and counted within the PI, which means that the data is now fully auditable. No verbal assurances that visits have taken place within timescales have been accepted.

Capacity problems due to sickness in the Permanency Team (CYAST) have impacted on the recording of statutory visits to looked after children in Quarter 3. An analysis of the records of visits on Paris has been completed and the Team Manager has been notified of the remedial work that needs to be completed in order that the visit records are brought up to date. Additional capacity provided within the team will ensure that visits are recorded promptly in order to be counted within the PI.

SCY/001a - The percentage change in the average number of hours of suitable education, training or employment children and young people receive while within the youth justice system by children and young people of statutory school age.

This PI is also a national PI that the Youth Justice Board requires all Youth Justice Services to report upon. The cohort of young people counted are those of statutory school age who have had community based programmes or custodial sentences ended in the quarter. This can sometimes be very low numbers so any variances can greatly affect the final outturn figure. In Quarter 3, only 2 young people comprised the cohort; in the previous quarter, there were 4 young people in the cohort.

3.3 Head of Service Plan

Improve our methods for identifying and supporting young carers

Young carers strategy implemented and i.d. card to be launched on 02/04/12 as planned. However the rollout out of the Professionals Pack and revised assessment forms won't be until after April 2012. Although the PI's for the assessment and services for young carers are running at 100%, we have not significantly improved the identification of young carers and the Young Carers' Action Plan is in place to address this.

Work with Wrexham to integrate respective Children's Integrated Disability Services (C.I.D.S.), enabling a more efficient and effective use of resources to improve service delivery for disabled children and their families

The issue of collaboration with Wrexham is now on hold although both Flintshire and Wrexham are working together regionally with the advent of Families First

Monitor and reduce staff absence

We continue to monitor staff absence but unfortunately there has been an increase across the Directorate.