

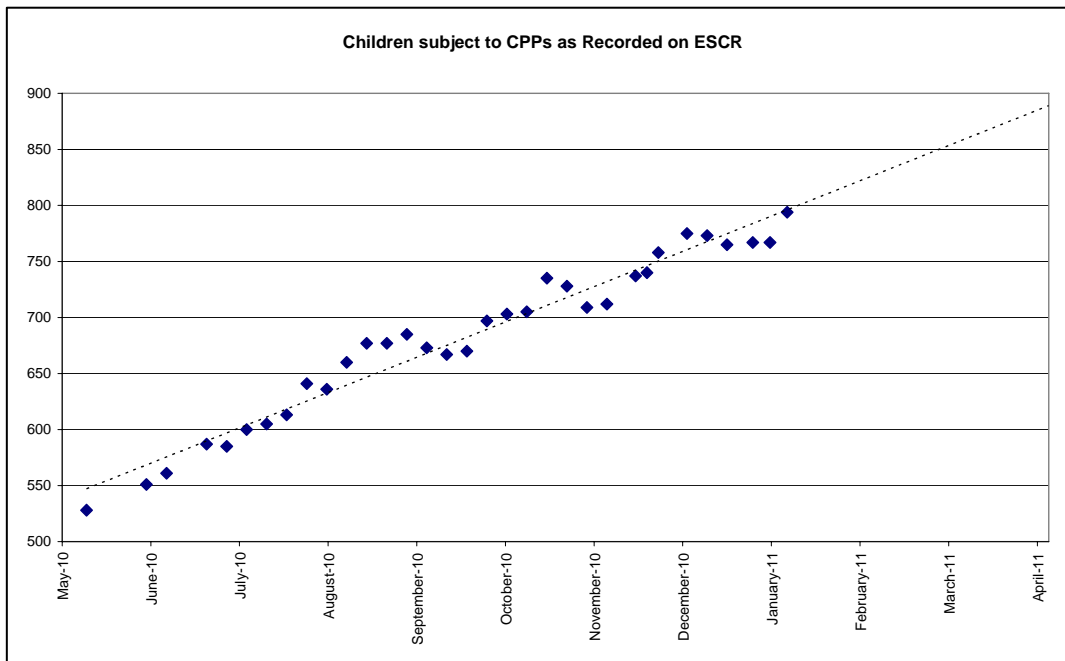
Improvement Priority - HW-3a/CYPP-9 Improve safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable children and adults through better information, recognition and response to risk

Lead Officer - Jackie Wilson

Overall Progress


Why is this a priority?

If children and young people are to achieve positive outcomes, they need to be safe and secure. With our partners it is important that we can identify when a child or young person is vulnerable, take decisive and timely action to make sure children are safe and to plan with them for a more secure future. If this 'preventative approach' doesn't work there are concerns that children or young people may be at risk of, or suffering, significant harm.



Overall Progress to date and outcomes achieved

Overall Summary

Quarter three continues to show that the overall improvements in safeguarding awareness, quality of services, changes to thresholds, improved management and governance all contribute to continuing to reduce the risk to the children of Leeds. We anticipate that these improvements will be reflected in outcomes of the recent unannounced inspection, once published. Improvements are further reflected in the recent Adoption inspection and in the supportive feedback received from the Children's Services Improvement Board.

Our overall judgement of amber reflects the wide range of service improvements made and that there is a high level of confidence that further service improvement and improved partnership efforts will continue the upward trend, despite the continued growth in the demand for services.

The graph above highlights the growth in the number of children subject to child protection plans, from 541 to 778 since May. This reflects that better safeguarding arrangements are being applied as well as an increase in the underlying demand. This increase is bringing the proportion of Leeds children subject to a child protection plan into line with core cities and statistical neighbours, indicating that the thresholds applied in Leeds are appropriate. There is also an accompanying increase in referrals and requests for service received which have this year-to-date already exceed the total received last year.

Improving the quality of safeguarding, and enforcing timely activity is stretching existing resources and consequently the timeliness of performance has suffered in quarter three. This is likely to continue to be an issue in quarter four before the full impact of service improvements is reflected in performance data. Although the timeliness of initial assessments has gone down slightly during the quarter, the October to date performance of 79.9% can be considered in line with the Improvement Notice target (80% cumulative, October to March). Core assessment performance (87.1%) remains above target (85% cumulative, October to March). Current performance is significantly higher than our statistical neighbours' performance last year. While our initial and core assessment workload has risen by over 30% when compared to the same period 12 months ago, the service has delivered a 30% increase in performance over the same period, and, importantly, improved quality.

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Achievements since the last report

- This quarter the Practice Improvement Programme completed its training and mentoring phase with 470 staff having now benefited. A major case file audit programme was completed with 94 auditors having reviewed 1,085 children's cases. 83% were rated in the top three bands representing a positive analysis of the quality of social care practice. The resulting consultants report indicates that progress is being made towards eradicating unacceptable practice while also highlighting areas for continued focus.
- The business case for the creation of an Integrated Safeguarding Unit (phase one LCC) has been developed with the creation of the unit to commence in April 2011. This is the main focus to ensure a sustainable service provision, to the required quality thresholds, can be delivered.
- Developing the governance arrangements for the LSCB progressed well in quarter three. This includes setting out clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities, reporting and success measures, and functions and starting to develop the business plan for 2011/12.
- The Adoption Service received a 'good' overall judgement, with outstanding for 'enjoy and achieve' from Ofsted, which is a major achievement.
- The Leeds conversion rate of referrals into assessments continues to increase bringing Leeds more into line with comparator performance. This evidences improved safeguarding practice in terms of revised thresholds and practice standards being applied, and the impact of the screening team's triage work.
- Further recruitment of social care professionals has resulted in 24 offers of appointment to social work posts being made at the end of December; ongoing recruitment to replace agency staff will continue.
- Outcome-based specifications have been introduced for external fostering and residential carers with a revised quality framework and inspection process.
- A revised version of the electronic procedures manual has been launched with a rolling programme of updates in place to ensure that staff continue to have easy access to the correct guidance. A recent self-audit of assessment teams evidenced improved awareness of how to access these online procedures.
- Further improvements in ICT systems have been implemented that promote flexible working and efficient and effective recording. This is enabling social worker access to management information in the field and is resulting in more accurate information about children subject to child protection plans.
- The detailed strategy and business case for replacement core information systems for CYPSC has been completed, agreed in principle by CLT, and approved at Executive Board in January 2011.

Challenges/Risks

- Improving quality and maintaining timeliness in the context of a continued and sustained rise in demand for services is a significant challenge, especially at a time of service redesign. The volume of referrals going on to initial and core assessments continue to rise; 108% more core assessments were carried out in quarter three 2010-11 than the same period 12 months ago (although the proportion completed within timescales has declined in quarter three). Additional capacity is being put in place such as a further two Safeguarding and Reviewing Chairs being recruited.
- There is a sustained trend of increase in outstanding assessments (in part due to late recording). Addressing this will be prioritised in quarter four to ensure cumulative targets are met and recording standards are enforced. Reassurance can be given that this does not imply children are left at risk rather that processes are not formally completed.
- The numbers of looked after children are not decreasing, so the overall workload and pressure on the service continues to increase. This is a key children's improvement obsession for the new Children and Young People's plan.
- ICT capacity and core systems performance issues have emerged in quarter three. The ICT infrastructure is unable to support the current usage of core social care systems, and is delaying the implementation of critical developments, such as e-forms delivery.

Council / Partnership Groups

Approved by (Accountable Officer)

Sal Tariq for Jackie Wilson

Date

09.02.11

Approved by (Accountable Director)

Nigel Richardson

Date

03.02.11

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Key actions for the next 6 months				
	Action (Desired Achievements)	Contributory Officer / Partner	Milestone / Actions	Timescale
	Continued implementation of the actions contained in the children's services improvement plan safeguarding priority	CO CYPSC	Improvement Board monitoring reflects acceptable progress	Ongoing

Performance Indicators										
Performance indicators aligned to the Improvement Priority										
Reference	Title	Owner	Frequency and Measure	Rise or Fall	Baseline	2009/10 Result	2010/11 Target	Q3 Result	Predicted Full Year Result	Data Quality
LSP-HW2b(i) a	Number of looked after children (Numerical) excluding unaccompanied asylum seekers	Children and Young People's Social Care	Quarterly Numerical	Fall	1281 (2007/08)	1362	n/a	1,376	n/a	No data concerns
LSP-HW2b(i) b	Number of children looked after (expressed as a rate per 10,000) excluding UASC	CYPSC	Quarterly Number	Fall	83.8 (2007/08)	89.1	n/a	90.6 (child popn is 151,800)	n/a	No data concerns
NI 59	The proportion of Initial Assessments undertaken within 7 days	CYPSC	Quarterly %	Rise	79.9% (08-09)	61.2%	80% (Oct-Mar cumulative)	79.7% (Apr-Dec)	80% (Oct-Mar cumulative)	No data concerns
NI 60	The percentage of core assessments that were completed within 35 working days	CYPSC	Quarterly %	Rise	77.4% (08-09)	64.9%	85% (Oct-Mar cumulative)	83.8% (Apr-Dec)	85% (Oct-Mar cumulative)	No data concerns
NI 61	Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption	CYPSC	Quarterly %	Rise	81.4% (07/08)	80.3%	85%	61.8% (21/34)	65%	Some concerns in year but subject to data validation at Q4
NI 64	Child Protection Plans lasting 2 years or more	CYPSC	Annual %	Fall	7.8% (07/08)	5.8%	5.5%	Annual PI to be reported in Q4		No data concerns

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Performance Indicators

Performance indicators aligned to the Improvement Priority

Reference	Title	Owner	Frequency and Measure	Rise or Fall	Baseline	2009/10 Result	2010/11 Target	Q3 Result	Predicted Full Year Result	Data Quality
NI 65	Percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time	CYPSC	Annual %	Bell Shaped	17.5% (07/08)	12.2%	12.5%		Annual PI to be reported in Q4	No data concerns
NI 67	Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales	CYPSC	Annual %	Rise	98.4% (07/08)	98.1%	100%		Annual PI to be reported in Q4	No data concerns
NI 68	Percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment	CYPSC	Annual %	Bell Shaped	56.8%	60.7%	70%		Annual PI to be reported in Q4	Some concerns with data