

**SPECIALIST CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 28th September, 2011

2.00 pm

**Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone**





AGENDA

SPECIALIST CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 28 September 2011 at 2.00pm Ask for: **Theresa Grayell**
Darent Room, Sessions House, County Telephone: **(01622) 694277**
Hall, Maidstone

Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the meeting

Membership (12)

Conservative (10): Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mr M J Angell, Mrs P T Cole,
Mr H J Craske, Mr T Gates, Mr J D Kirby, Mr S Manion,
Mr M J Northey, Mr J M Ozog and Mr C T Wells

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr M J Vye (Vice-Chairman)

Labour (1): Mr E Green

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UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

Item No

A. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- A1 Introduction/webcasting
- A2 Substitutes
- A3 Declarations of Members' Interest relating to items on today's agenda
- A4 Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 21 June 2011 (Pages 1 - 28)
Together with minutes of meetings of the:
Corporate Parenting Panel held on 21 June and 31 August 2011
Children's Services Improvement Panel held on 22 June and 13 July 2011

A5 Dates of Meetings in 2012

The Committee is asked to note that the following dates have been reserved for this Committee's meetings in 2012:-

Thursday 19 January – 2.00 pm
Thursday 22 March – 10.00 am
Thursday 21 June – 10.00 am
Friday 28 September – 10.00 am
Friday 23 November – 10.00 am

A6 Chairman's Announcements

A7 Oral Update by Cabinet Member

B. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

B1 Children's Services Improvement Plan - Quarterly Update (Pages 29 - 66)

B2 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - a progress report on the development of the service (Pages 67 - 72)

C. ITEMS FOR NOTE AND COMMENT

C1 Specialist Children's Services Budget Forecast Report 2011/12 (Pages 73 - 90)

C2 Connecting with Communities - 2010/11 Annual Report on Consultation, Engagement and Involvement Activity (Pages 91 - 104)

C3 Complaints 2010/11 (Pages 105 - 124)

D. SELECT COMMITTEE UPDATE

D1 Update on Select Committee work (Pages 125 - 126)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
(01622) 694002

Tuesday, 20 September 2011

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

**SPECIALIST CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 21 June 2011.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mr M J Angell, Mrs P T Cole, Mr H J Craske, Mr T Gates, Mr J D Kirby, Mr S J G Koowaree (Substitute for Mr M J Vye), Mr S Manion, Mr M J Northey, Mr J M Ozog Mr C T Wells

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P W A Lake Mrs J Whittle

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Newsam (Interim Corporate Director of Families and Social Care), Mr A Pettigrew (Interim Director, Specialist Children's Services) Miss T Grayell (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

(Item A4)

Mrs A D Allen proposed and Mr S Manion seconded that Mr M J Vye be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Agreed without a vote

Mr Vye was duly elected.

4. Declarations of Members' interest relating to items on today's agenda

(Item A5)

Mr S J G Koowaree made a general declaration of interest as the grandparent of a child who is in Local Authority care.

5. Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel on 27 April 2011

(Item A6)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel, held on 27 April 2011, be noted.

Matters Arising

Under Minute 5, Mr Wells commented that the wording of the points listed gave the impression that the services provided in the Virtual School Business Plan were unevenly distributed between East and West Kent. The true picture is that some appointments in West Kent were made earlier than those in East Kent and so more information is available on progress made in that area.

6. Dates of Future Meetings

(Item A7)

The Committee noted the dates reserved for its meetings for the remainder of 2011, as follows:-

Wednesday 28 September 2011 – 2.00 pm

Thursday 17 November 2011 – 10.00 am

7. Oral Update by Cabinet Member

(Item A9)

1. Mrs Whittle set out a number of recent and current developments, as follows:-

New Children's Services governance arrangements are now established, including the new Corporate Parenting Panel and Children's Services Improvement Panel, which had each held their inaugural meetings. Work on the Staff Advisory Group Panel is still ongoing.

The Shadow a Social Worker scheme had had good take up by KCC Members, and feedback from those who had already participated showed it to be a good experience.

The Children's Services Improvement Plan: There are currently some 2,700 cases which have been without an allocated social worker for 28 days or more, due to social worker vacancy levels. The establishment of social workers is now nearly at full strength but the percentage of experienced social workers needs to be increased. A recruitment and retention package is being introduced to address this, and pay levels are only one aspect of this package.

On 20 June, Cabinet had received a report from Liz Railton, the Chairman of the Independent Improvement Board, which had been very complimentary about the KCC's approach to addressing this issue, while highlighting the increase in referral rates, Child Protection Plans and LAC.

CAMHS. Ofsted had identified failings in this service, but much progress is being made with NHS colleagues to develop jointly-commissioned services and aligned budgets. The most pressing need is faster referral times.

2. Arising from comments and questions from Members, the following points were highlighted:-

- There is still a high percentage of agency social work staff, but this will decrease when more experienced social workers are recruited.
- it is vital that KCC Members remained involved in Adoption Panels, and that time taken to process adoptions be shortened. Martin Narey, formerly head of Barnardo's, has been engaged to address this aim.
- Members wished to have more up-to-date statistics than those given (for the end of March), but it was explained that the statistics reported to POSCs were governed by the Core Monitoring timetable. Members are sent monthly updates of statistics.

- Members welcomed news of progress on addressing CAMHS shortfalls, as this had been a long-standing concern. Members need frequent updates on progress on this issue, and a further report was requested for the POSC's next meeting.
- although some £750,000 additional government funding had been made available to fund mental health service provision for 16- and 17- year olds, one aspect of funding which needs to be addressed is the CAMHS costs to Kent of young people placed by other local authorities, which is either not recouped or only slowly recouped, leaving KCC to carry the cost.
- morale amongst social work staff had understandably suffered as a result of the Ofsted report and staffing difficulties.

3. Members placed on record their thanks and deep appreciation of the difficult work undertaken by social work staff but acknowledged that this needs to be supported by ensuring that those staff have reasonable and manageable workloads.

4. It was proposed, and generally supported, that a recommendation be made to Cabinet that it urge PCTs to retrieve from the placing authority the costs of providing CAMHS services to young people placed by those authorities.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information given in the update and in response to Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks;
- b) a recommendation be made to Cabinet that it urge PCTs to retrieve from other local authorities the costs of providing CAMHS services to young people placed by those authorities; and
- c) social work staff be advised of Members' thanks and deep appreciation of the difficult work they undertake and the acknowledgement that this appreciation needs to be supported by ensuring that they have reasonable and manageable workloads.

8. Proposals for a KCC Assisted Boarding Scheme and DVD about the Royal Alexandra and Albert School

(Item B1)

Miss F Adams, Policy Officer, was in attendance for this item

1. Mrs Whittle and Miss Adams introduced the report and described the work being done by the Royal Alexandra and Albert School in Reigate, Surrey with vulnerable young people on the edge of care, to help them stay with their families. Members were shown a DVD version of the school's prospectus and one of former pupils talking about their experiences of being in care and at boarding school. The key points of the proposed boarding scheme were highlighted, as follows:-

- the number of young people who could be accommodated in a boarding scheme at such a school would be small, but the quality of the experience and the benefit to those young people would potentially be huge. Demand for such a scheme would be likely to escalate in the future.

- the scheme would start children as boarders between ages of 10 and 12, and they would be fully involved in deciding whether or not they wish to attend.
- the scheme would not normally include children with Special Educational Needs unless there were very specific circumstances.
- the cost of the scheme compare well with the costs of fostering a child. A fostering placement can cost the KCC between £800 and £1,000 per week. Once the contribution made by the schools grant is taken into account, a year's boarding for one pupil in such a scheme need cost the KCC only £5,000 – 8,000 per annum, plus extras such a school trips.
- although the Royal Alexandra and Albert School is in Reigate, Surrey, it would be near enough for Kent parents to visit their children, but it would be helpful to build up a selection of schools able to offer the scheme in various locations across Kent.
- once placed, a child would continue to be funded and supported by the local authority all through their education. They would not leave unless they wished to do so.
- suitable children would be identified via family group conferencing. At the Royal Alexandra and Albert School, the Head Teacher also interviews prospective candidates to ensure that the school will suit them. Some 50-60% of candidates get through the selection process.

2. In discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- a) some Members talked about their own positive experiences of boarding school, as pupils and one as a former housemaster, and outlined the potential benefits to young people. The image of boarding schools as somewhat draconian institutions no longer matched the reality;
- b) Members broadly welcomed the proposals as a positive option for some - but not all - vulnerable children, and cautioned that children who could benefit from such placements would need to be carefully chosen;
- c) the costs of not sending a child to such a placement should also be taken into account; and
- d) the fact that children with Special Educational Needs would not be accepted would exclude many who could potentially benefit.

3. Mr C T Wells proposed and Mr J M Ozog seconded that the recommendation in the report be changed from 'to note' to 'to endorse the business case ...'

Agreed without a vote

4. It was then suggested and generally agreed that the Committee make a recommendation that Cabinet be urged to support the proposed boarding scheme.

Agreed without a vote

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the business case for establishing a Kent assisted boarding scheme, appended to the report, be endorsed; and
- b) a recommendation be made to Cabinet urging them to support the proposal.

9. 'Putting Children First'; Kent's Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

(Item B2)

1. Mr Newsam introduced the item and added that Liz Railton had praised the KCC for its good progress on the Improvement Plan. He confirmed that the minutes of the regular Children's Services Improvement Panel (CSIP) meetings would be referred to the POSC once they had been approved.
2. RESOLVED that the update report be noted, with thanks, and that a similar report be brought to each meeting of the POSC.

10. KCC's Performance Management Framework

(Item C1)

The Chairman secured the Committee's agreement to consider this item as urgent business as the papers had not been placed on public deposit with the required five days' notice.

Mr D Whittle, Policy Manager, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Whittle introduced the item and apologised for its lateness, but pointed out that this slight delay had allowed more up-to-date information to be offered.
2. Members commented that issues covered in the Improvement Plan linked into the Performance Management Framework.
3. RESOLVED that the information in the report be noted, with thanks.

11. Core Monitoring Report

(Item C2)

Mr R Fitzgerald, Performance Manager, was in attendance for this item.

RESOLVED that the information set out in the report be noted, with thanks.

12. Savings Monitoring Report

(Item C3)

The Chairman secured the Committee's agreement to consider this item as urgent business as the papers had not been placed on public deposit with the required five days' notice.

Miss M Goldsmith, Finance Business Partner, was in attendance for this item.

1. Miss Goldsmith presented a series of slides which set out progress against the savings targets currently rated as 'red' or 'amber'. Mr Newsam and Miss Goldsmith then responded to comment and questions from Members, and the points highlighted included the following:-

- a) the KCC will look at how it works with its various partners to assess where potential savings could be made in services which are delivered by multi-agency working;
- b) although Members had been advised that some savings would be made on 'back office' staffing, it should be borne in mind that, when such reductions had been made in the past, the reduced levels of support had impacted on front-line staff. For instance, when social work assistants had been reduced, social workers had had to divert some of their time and energy towards doing their own data input, reducing the time available to spend with clients;
- c) for young asylum seekers who have exhausted their right to stay, the government will stop making payments to the KCC, which will then have to bear the cost of their care while they await repatriation. The KCC had successfully re-negotiated a reduction of these costs, and Members welcomed this; and
- d) future reports would be able to give more detail on some of the specific savings targets listed; for instance, the costs of, and income from, unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people, and in particular the resources and costs involved in foster care accommodation for asylum seekers under 16;

2. RESOLVED that the information set out in the report and given in response to Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks.

13. Kent Environment Strategy and ISO 14001 Update

(Item C4)

This report was not available at the time of the meeting. The Democratic Services Officer undertook to send it to Members when it was available, and questions arising from it could then be directed to the report author.

14. Update on Select Committee Work

(Item D1)

1. Members emphasised the importance of the student journey for Looked After Children and commented that this would need to be well covered by the Select Committee.

2. RESOLVED that the information set out in the report be noted, with thanks.

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held in Swale 3, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 21 June 2011.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mr R E Brookbank, Mrs P T Cole, Mr G Cooke, Mr P W A Lake, Mr K H Pugh, Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mrs J Whittle, Mr S Griffiths, Mr G Razey.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms K Kerswell (Managing Director), Mr A Pettigrew (Interim Director, Specialist Children's Services), Mr N Baker (Head of Kent Youth Service), Mrs L Totman (Head of Corporate Parenting), Mr P Brightwell (Policy & Performance Manager - Looked After Children), Mr T Doran (Head Teacher of Looked After Children - VSK), Mr D Waller (Directorate Manager: Governance, Member Support & Communication) Miss T Grayell (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

8. Membership

(Item A1)

1. The Panel noted its new Membership, which now included more KCC Members, two Head Teachers and one Foster Carer. It was planned that a second Foster Carer would join, as well as two representatives of the Children In Care Council.
2. The Chairman welcomed Mr Cowan, Mr Griffiths and Mr Razey to their first meeting.

9. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2011

(Item A3)

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2011 are correctly recorded and they be signed by the Chairman.
2. Members were advised of two sessions of Corporate Parenting training for all KCC Members, on 13 and 20 July, and that more dates are planned. A guide to good Corporate Parenting would also be sent to all Members.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

(Item A4)

The Panel noted the dates reserved for its meetings for the remainder of 2011, as follows:-

Wednesday 31 August 2011, 10.00 am
Thursday 13 October 2011, 2.00 pm
Monday 5 December 2011, 2.00 pm

All meetings will take place at County Hall.

Before proceeding to the main business, the Chairman sought and received the Panel's agreement to consider all items as urgent business, as the papers had not been placed on public deposit with the required five clear days' notice.

11. Exclusions

(Item B1)

1. Mr Waller introduced the report, which had been prepared in response to Members' request for more detailed information. Mr Pettigrew, Mr Baker and Mr Doran responded to comments and questions from Panel Members. The following points were highlighted:-

- a) the number of exclusions of LAC from school has risen nationally, but Kent has three times the national average;
- b) the paper only covers schools, but there are many other providers of education for young people over the age of 16. To establish a protocol to address the issue across the whole county, all providers would need to be included;
- c) the Youth Service had been a contributor to the commissioning of alternative education, and now the service also includes the Youth Offending Service, it is able to add a valuable multi-agency element;
- d) Kent has a history of excluding more LAC from school than any of its neighbour counties. This is partly due to the fact that LAC are likely to have more behavioural problems than other young people. Exclusions of LAC place an extra pressure on foster families. The protocol to reduce LAC exclusions is urgently needed;
- e) schools could be seen as having a Corporate Parent role similar to that of the County Council;
- f) it would be useful to look at what other counties have in terms of an exclusion protocol, and to what extent this has contributed to their lower exclusion rates;
- g) the Virtual School is able to support young people well and has had a positive impact of the number of exclusions, being able to introduce specialist expertise earlier;
- h) it is very difficult to write a protocol which addresses the needs of all LAC, as every child has their own individual challenges and needs;
- i) there is always a delicate balance to be achieved between keeping a child in school while problems are worked through and taking them out of school temporarily to address problems, allowing them to adjust (eg if they are in a new placement) and returning them to school when they are more able to settle; and

- j) it is important that the Panel monitors this issue and has further reports on progress. The Panel's comments could be built into the Protocol.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information given in the report and in response to Panel Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks;
- b) comments made by Panel Members be taken into account when developing the Protocol; and
- c) a further report be brought to the Panel to update Members on progress made.

12. Missing Children

(Item B2)

1. Mr Brightwell introduced the report and he and Mrs Totman and Mr Doran responded to comments and questions from Panel Members. The following points were highlighted:-

- a) some concerns were expressed about the accuracy of the data available, as it could be 4 – 6 weeks old. Having an integrated data set would allow much more accurate data to be prepared;
- b) the report did not include vulnerable children who are still at home with their families, and a future report was requested which would set out how the KCC works to support these children;
- c) children go 'missing' for many reasons, and a greater understanding is needed of the reasons for this. Some patterns can be identified, eg many of the LAC who go missing in Thanet are those placed by other local authorities and who have decided to return home. Education Welfare Officers work with all LAC, including those placed by other local authorities; and
- d) work had been done about two years ago to identify the costs incurred in dealing with missing children placed by other local authorities, but the costs were found to be low and so are not a major concern. What is more of a burden is the strain on staff time and resources, which are diverted from Kent's own LAC.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information given in the report and in response to Panel Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks; and
- b) a further paper on how the KCC works to support vulnerable children who are still at home with their families be prepared for a future meeting of the Panel.

13. Update on the Work of the Virtual Head Teacher for Looked After Children (Item B3)

1. Mr Doran introduced the report and updated on developments since the Panel's previous meeting. He responded to comments and questions from Panel Members. The following points were highlighted:-

- a) Virtual School Kent was formally launched on 23 May and had been the subject of a workshop at the 'Narrowing the Gap for LAC' Conference. This workshop was run by a former LAC and was very successful;
- b) there are now new targets for, and ways of reporting, health assessments. Health assessments must now be taken account of in all care plans, and progress towards achieving the 85% target by March 2012 is monitored monthly;
- c) there are some outstanding IT issues about the way in which health assessments are recorded, and the way in which they would be included in the ICS system in time for a September 2011 launch; and
- d) the team had had success in attracting more than 100 very well qualified applicants for its Higher Level Teaching Assistant posts.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information given in the report and in response to Panel Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks; and
- b) the ongoing development of services for LAC be supported, and a further report on the difference being made by Virtual School Kent be presented to the Panel's October meeting.

14. Draft LAC Strategy (Item B4)

1. Mr Brightwell introduced the report and explained that the draft Strategy had been revised, condensed and re-focussed since it was last reported to the Panel. He and Mr Pettigrew, Mrs Totman and Mr Doran responded to comments and questions from Panel Members. The following points were highlighted:-

- a) the Strategy is multi-agency and has support from all partners, who must work together to achieve its ambitions and inspire confidence in the young people whom they are trying to help;
- b) one aim of the shortened Strategy is to help young people understand how the decisions which shape their care are made, and by whom. The final document will be in a user-friendly form, and will also exist in summary form, and on-line. It will include pictures of, and drawings by, young people in care;

- c) increased multi-agency working amongst people who are closest to and known by a child will support them in their current placement and reduce the number of times they need to move;
- d) Kent scores well, nationally, in the small average number of moves its LAC make, and no child is moved on unless the move is in the best interest of the child; for instance, to move them from a temporary to a permanent family placement is a good move and not to be avoided. To minimise moves caused by placement breakdown, Foster Parents are given extensive support; and
- e) decisions on suitable placements are made jointly by a whole range of professionals, and the involvement of the child in the decision is paramount.

2. Ms Kerswell commented that she would like to see the Strategy include an introduction written by a young person, and that her aim was for every senior KCC officer to have the Corporate Parenting responsibility included explicitly in their job description.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the draft Strategy be welcomed and endorsed, and the information given in the report and in response to Panel Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks; and
- b) a further paper on the Strategy's action plan and how the Panel can monitor progress be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

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CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held in Swale 1, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 31 August 2011.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mr R E Brookbank, Mrs P T Cole, Mrs E Green, Mr P W A Lake, Mr K H Pugh, Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mrs C J Waters, Mr M J Whiting and Mrs J Whittle

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Pettigrew (Interim Director, Specialist Children's Services), Mrs L Totman (Head of Corporate Parenting), Mr P Brightwell (Policy & Performance Manager - Looked After Children), Mr T Doran (Head Teacher of Looked After Children - VSK), Mrs B Bridgland (Work Programme Officer) and Miss T Grayell (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

15. Membership

(Item A1)

1. Members noted that two new co-opted Members - Teresa Carpenter, a Foster Carer, and Anthony Duncan, representing the Children In Care Council - had joined the Panel.
2. Alan Barham, Head Teacher of the Sittingbourne Community College, had tendered his resignation from the Panel as he found that he is unable to commit sufficient time.
3. Mrs Carpenter and Mr Duncan were both welcomed to their first meeting, and Mr Barham's resignation was noted with regret. A replacement will be sought, so the representation of Head Teachers on the Panel can continue.

16. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2011

(Item A3)

RESOLVED that, subject to the deletion of the first two sentences of paragraph 1 d) of Minute 11, the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June are correctly recorded and they be signed by the Chairman.

17. Matters arising from the Minutes

Minute 13, paragraph 1 c)

Members discussed the issue of health assessments for Looked After Children and received points of clarification from officers. The following points were highlighted:-

- a) the IT issues around the recording of health assessments which were mentioned in the minute are being dealt with, and the backlog of recording is being reduced;

- b) Members were assured that the IT issues had not and do not delay or stop assessments from being done. The rate of assessments being completed has actually increased over this period;
- c) health assessments in general are still an issue for many LAC, with some being reluctant to have them and anxious about what it is involved. More work is needed on the way assessments are approached and the issue is broached with young people; and
- d) communication around the issue is important and needs to be thoughtful and innovative. Suggestions put forward for ways to approach the issue were to use a well-known athlete to promote the importance of regular health checks, to make use of Telehealth equipment, and to hold a Healthy Living Day event.

18. Meeting Dates 2011/2012

(Item A4)

The dates reserved for the Panel's meetings for the remainder of 2011 and through 2012 were noted, as follows:-

Friday 7 October 2011, 2.00 pm (this replaces 13 October)
Monday 5 December 2011, 2.00 pm
Thursday 23 February 2012, 10.00 am
Thursday 19 April 2012, 10.00 am
Wednesday 13 June 2012, 2.00 pm
Thursday 20 September 2012, 2.00 pm
Friday 26 October 2012, 10.00 am
Friday 14 December 2012, 10.00 am

All meetings will take place at County Hall.

19. Chairman's and Cabinet Member's Oral Updates

1. To allow the Chairman and Cabinet Member to update Members on issues which are not part of the agenda, a new item was added to the agenda for this and each future meeting.
2. The Cabinet Member for Specialist Children gave an oral update on the following issues:-

Backlog of unallocated cases – Work on this is proceeding, and KCC has exceeded the target set for it by the Secretary of State.

Early Intervention and Preventative Services Strategy – this is to be introduced in the autumn of 2011 and will be the subject of a report to the Specialist Children's services POSC in November.

New Assisted Boarding Scheme – the scheme discussed at the Panel's June meeting is being developed.

Reducing the number of Looked After Children

Review of Adoption Services – Martin Narey’s independent report on this will be considered by the County Council on 20 October, and a report on the issue will be made to the Panel’s December meeting.

Review of Children’s Trusts

Emergence of Locality Boards

3. Members asked to be given a written executive summary of progress on issues identified by Ofsted, as a way of helping them to identify key points, emerging issues and latest news.

20. Performance and Quality Assurance Frameworks

(Item B1)

1. Mr Pettigrew introduced the report and presented a series of slides. He emphasised the importance of performance and quality assurance frameworks in moving forward with issues identified in the Improvement Notice. He responded to comments and questions from Members and the following points were highlighted:-

- a) Members requested that a simplified summary of the performance report be prepared, to help them identify salient points and prompt questions. The one-page ‘dashboard’ summary which is used for the Children’s Services Improvement Panel could be used. Mr Pettigrew undertook to provide a briefer analysis for future meetings;
- b) this ‘dashboard’ tool and the issues listed on page 41 of today’s agenda would make valuable additions to future Corporate Parenting training for Members; and
- c) a breakdown of information by district, to help Members to understand trends in their own divisions, will shortly be available, and could be useful for Children’s Trusts and Locality Board.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information given in the report and presentation and in response to Members’ comments and questions be noted, with thanks;
- b) the frameworks be endorsed; and
- c) the summary report and toolkit items requested by Members be developed.

21. Progress on delivering the Improvement Plan targets and Ofsted's requirements

(Item B2)

1. Mrs Totman introduced the report and, with Mr Pettigrew and Mr Brightwell, responded to comments and questions from Members. The following points were highlighted:-

- a) a protocol is being developed by the KCC to reclaim money spent on CAMHS services for young people placed in Kent by other local authorities;
- b) some information is noted in the report as being 'unavailable'. This is supplied by other agencies and there is some delay in it being passed on, although Members were assured that there is no barrier to information being passed on;
- c) Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) could be tasked with pressing for the completion of initial health assessments for young people entering care, as the first assessment is the most important;
- d) although the KCC would welcome an increase in the number of IROs, more important aims are to reduce the number of Looked After Children and increase the number of social workers;
- e) good school attendance is vital for a LAC, and attendance is closely monitored. The first year of monitoring had shown good progress in addressing this issue. Failure to attend school is a useful first indicator of other problems; and
- f) although Ofsted recommended that more information sharing should go on, Kent is already very innovative in the way it shares information, eg between schools and social services. Reports presented to the Panel are necessarily limited to information about LAC.

2. RESOLVED that the information set out in the report and given in response to Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks.

22. Developing Corporate Parenting in KCC (Item B3)

1. Mr Brightwell introduced the report and the 'Ten Questions' document, and he, Mr Pettigrew, Mrs Totman and Mr Doran responded to comments and questions from Members. The following points were highlighted:-

- a) the Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill will, if it becomes legislation, give LAC status to all young people held in custody in Kent. KCC will be required to take on increased costs and responsibility, but increased funding will not follow automatically but will be reliant on results, taking the form of reimbursement of outlay. The cost of keeping a young person in custody is £214 per day. Panel Members will be supplied with a summary of the Bill, and the impact of it will be the subject of a future report to the Panel;
- b) Kent scores better than many other local authorities in the stability of its placements and in limiting the number of times a child is moved;

- c) although Kent has a higher number of LAC than some other local authorities, the majority of its cases tend to be less challenging;
 - d) feedback from Foster Carers on Q6: 'How well do your Foster Care arrangements work?' could be collected by including the comments by carers the end of the review form, and via the Foster carers Advisory Board;
 - e) some Members commented that Members' role as Corporate Parents is not given sufficient priority in Members induction, and Members are not as involved as they could be or should be. One question to add to the 10 is 'Do elected Members get the information they need to fulfil their CP role?'; and
 - f) the 2010 Ofsted report had said that 'achievement, attendance and progress were inadequate', but Members were assured that, although only partial GCSE results are so far available, the picture of performance is good. Previous predictions had proved to be inaccurate.
2. RESOLVED that the information set out in the report and given in response to Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks.

23. Annual Adoption Report (Item B4a)

The Chairman sought and received the Panel's agreement to consider this item as urgent business as the papers had not been placed on public deposit with the required five days' notice.

Mrs V Glenn, County Manager for Adoption, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Glenn introduced the report and responded to comments and questions from Members. The following points were highlighted:-
- a) an inspection of the adoption service will start on 31 October 2011 and last for two weeks. The previous inspection, in 2008, had been very successful and all three recommendations made had been acted upon. Inspectors will wish to meet the Cabinet Member and the Panel Chairman;
 - b) Members asked about plans to consider reconvening the Concurrency Panel, which they felt had worked well but had been discontinued. Martin Narey is looking at this as part of his independent report on the adoption service;
 - c) it was suggested that a working group be set up to look into engagement between KCC and the courts;
 - d) Kent parents who wish to adopt a child from abroad are supported by the KCC adoption service but have to pay for the service provided.

Kent will always assess any relatives of an overseas child who are living in this country before placing the child with adoptive parents;

- e) neither the age or ethnicity of adopters or the ethnicity of the child are considered as barriers to an adoption placement;
 - f) Special Guardianship Orders can be made in favour of a member of the child's birth family in an effort to keep them with their birth family as far as possible; and
 - g) an interim report on the adoption service will be available at the end of September and will be referred to the Panel's *October?* mtg.
2. The Panel was advised that Mrs Glenn will be leaving her current post at the end of November, and she received Members' thanks and best wishes for the future.
3. RESOLVED that the information set out in the report and given in response to Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks.

24. Fostering Position Statement 2010/2011
(Item B4b)

Mrs T Vickers, Fostering County Manager, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Vickers introduced the report and highlighted the key priorities for the service. She and Mr Pettigrew responded to comments and questions from Members. The following points were highlighted:-

- a) young people in care are involved in the process of recruiting foster carers, and their input is much valued;
 - b) the fostering team is piloting a scheme to promote foster caring via locals schools, in partnerships with Virtual School Kent, starting with an initial project in Dartford and later in Dover; and
 - c) a review of the IT payment system and the ongoing problems with payments to foster carers has been undertaken, and IT problems are now almost solved. The gaps in performance arising from these issues were not the fault of the staff.
2. RESOLVED that:-
- a) the information set out in the report and given in response to Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks; and
 - b) the Fostering team be congratulated on exceeding their target of registered foster carers.

25. Promoting Children's Social Care

(Item B5)

Mr I Tucker, Senior Press Officer, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Tucker introduced the report and responded to comments and questions from Members. Members added the following suggestions to those listed in the report:-
 - a) a feature on local radio or TV to highlight the social worker role would help to raise greater awareness of the profession;
 - b) retiring social workers need to have their contribution recognised in a more timely way. Sometimes a letter marking their retirement and acknowledging their contribution arrives some time after they have left;
 - c) retiring social workers could be treated to a tea party at County Hall with the Chairman of the County Council;
 - d) social workers who have given long service could be given a long service medal, in the same way that the Police and Fire Services reward long-serving staff; and
 - e) the 'shadow a social worker' scheme, discussed previously by the Panel, will allow elected Members to understand the social work role. To include District Council housing officers in this scheme would be useful for them, as housing is a key issue in family cohesion, but the scheme must not become too onerous or a burden upon social worker being shadowed.
2. RESOLVED that the suggestions listed in the report be noted and welcomed, and the Members' additional suggestions, set out above, be added.

26. Update on Looked After Children (LAC) Exclusions

(Item B6)

Mr C Berry, Head of Attendance and Behaviour Service, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Berry introduced the report and he and Mr Doran responded to comments and questions from Members. The following points were highlighted:-
 - a) the exclusion protocol is vital to the work of Virtual School Kent;
 - b) data will soon be available on fixed-term exclusions;
 - c) unlike local authority schools, Academies have no requirement to report exclusions, so information sharing must rely on good informal relationships. The number of Academies makes this reporting a big issue;

- d) there is no timescale within which fixed exclusions have to be reported to Corporate Parents, but they always are reported as a matter of best practice; and
 - e) it is a requirement that young people up to statutory school age are offered an alternative placement, eg an apprenticeship, if permanently excluded, but there is no requirement as yet for any such arrangement for young people over 16.
2. RESOLVED that the information set out in the report and given in response to Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks.

27. Update regarding the work of the Head Teacher of Virtual School Kent (VSK)
(Item B7)

1. Mr Doran introduced the report and responded to comment and questions from Members. The following points were highlighted:-
- a) on 1 September 2011, VSK will become fully operational, with a highly-qualified staff team. The East and West Kent VSK teams are co-located with related local services;
 - b) a review of the assessment pilot will shortly be undertaken and will be reported to the Panel's October meeting;
 - c) September will see the launch of a VSK rewards structure, to which designated teachers will be able to refer;
 - d) Kent has scored well this year against NI 101, with some results still awaited; and
 - e) persistent absence has reduced in the last year, and the VSK team are confident that they can meet the target set by the Secretary of State.
2. RESOLVED that the information set out in the report and given in response to Members' comments and questions be noted, with thanks.

Minutes of the Children's Service Improvement Panel
Meeting Held: 22 June 2011 09:00 Medway Suite

Present:

Mrs Whittle (Chair)
Mrs Allen
Mrs Dean
Miss Hohler
Mr Lake
Mr Smith
Mrs Waters
Mr Wells

Officers:

Malcolm Newsam
Debra Exall
Jennifer Maiden-Brooks
Fiona Maycock (Clerk)
Donna Shkalla

Apologies:

Mr Christie
Mr Cubitt
Mr Ferrin

1. Previous Minutes

1.1 Debra Exall advised that Corporate Parenting Member training sessions would be held on 13 and 20 July 2011. **Mrs Whittle asked for additional sessions to be booked for early autumn.**

1.2 The minutes of the previous Improvement Panel were agreed as a true representation of the meeting. Confirmation was given that the minutes will be reported to Cabinet and the Specialist Children's Services POSC to provide transparency and regular monitoring of progress against the Improvement Plan.

2. Corporate Director's Progress Report

2.1 Mr Newsam summarised the report. The number of referrals to Children's Services continues to be high, as does the number of Initial Assessments started. Timeliness of completion of Initial Assessments is improving.

2.2 An audit of the work of the County Duty Team shows a significant increase in quality. Mrs Allen asked whether it is possible to know where the referrals are coming from. Donna Shkalla confirmed that Children's Services already report on the source of contact but additional work is being done to analyse in detail the contact trail (who refers, what happens) using May data. **This will be provided at the next meeting.** Mr Newsam informed Members that eventually all contacts will be migrated into a County Duty Service; this will ensure one common centre for contacts and consistency of thresholds, less work in and reduced pressure on the 12 Duty and Initial Assessment Teams (DIAT).

2.3 Good progress was also being made on completing Core Assessments out of timescale. The peripatetic team (interim social workers) have had a big impact but Mr Newsam emphasised the danger of them simply transferring cases back to permanent social workers at the end of their contract. To avoid this, there is robust management of throughput, including setting anticipated end dates for all peripatetic team cases. Mr Wells asked when the Parenting Capacity Assessment Service (PCAS) teams would return to their normal work, and what the impact has been of them not undertaking their normal workload. Mr Newsam explained that staff are aware no decision has yet been made about future structure, however it does not appear that diverting PCAS has had any significant negative impact on the service. Mrs Whittle confirmed that there is little evidence that Courts regard PCAS teams as any more independent than the children and family social workers. **It was agreed that officers should consider whether, and for how long, PCAS would be needed to provide additional capacity when the peripatetic team's contract finishes and provide advice on this to Members.**

2.4 Miss Hohler asked whether we are likely to meet the Ofsted targets as the data shows we still have some way to go. Mr Newsam was confident that the targets on unallocated cases and timeliness of Initial Assessments would be achieved. On timeliness of Core Assessments, the target of 100 was incredibly difficult for a county the size of Kent, equating to just a handful of cases per district. However, he had spent a significant amount of time discussing each team's plans for achieving the target and he was confident that very significant improvement would be demonstrated over the next few weeks.

3. Core Strategy Updates

3.1 Debra Exall outlined the progress made against each of the core tasks. She informed Members that Donna Marriott and Donna Shkalla will be presenting the Performance Management Framework and Online Quality Assurance tool to the next Improvement Board; **this will then be brought to the next Improvement Panel meeting.**

3.2 Mrs Whittle reported on a recent discussion with Detective Superintendent Maria Shepherd from Kent Police regarding establishment of a multi-agency referral centre with Police, Health, and Children's Services. This should improve screening, reduce inappropriate referrals and promote feedback to other organisations.

3.3 On supervision, Mr Newsam emphasised that this was an area of vulnerability for the organisation. A supervision audit is taking place in June and July and it is anticipated that it will reveal that the quality and level of supervision is still not what it should be, for the reasons outlined in the core strategy update. **The results of the Supervision Audit will be brought to a future CSIP meeting.**

3.4 Mr Lake asked what progress has been made on providing tools for recording supervision following the Price Waterhouse Cooper Review. Donna Shkalla explained that ICS currently records supervision case notes and actions - it is planned to develop a performance management tool to assist with understanding progress for the child from one supervision to the next. This will be coupled with the worker supervision tracker currently being piloted in Dover. These cannot be combined as one is about the worker and the other about the child.

3.5 Mr Smith emphasised the need to focus on the children. Mrs Whittle agreed and accepted there is an enormous pressure on staff to deliver all the improvements simultaneously. Reducing social worker caseloads and a good IT recording system should enable them to spend more time with children and families. Mr Newsam reminded Members that the problems are long standing, including under-investment in the past, but increasing managerial discipline will deliver effective working and better outcomes for children.

3.8 Mrs Whittle informed Members that a way to celebrate the work of social workers is being proactively sought. Mr Newsam also cited the excellent work of Donna Marriott and the Safeguarding Unit, and Donna Shkalla and the Management Information Unit. Mr Smith asked for the Panel formally to recognise their achievements.

3.9 Debra Exall reported that a progress report will be going to the Improvement Board on the Integrated Children's System (ICS), **which will come to the next Improvement Panel**. Mrs Dean asked for an estimate of timescale for implementation of a new system. Mr Newsam gave a minimum timescale of 12 months after the agreement has been finalised. He explained that improvements to the current ICS system are being made - upgrades have been implemented to networks and increased memory capacity of individual PCs and laptops - but these are not long term solutions.

4. Data Reports

4.1 Donna Shkalla explained the reports to Members for clarity of interpretation; percentage of referrals going on to initial assessments gives the comparison between the number of referrals received and number of initial assessments started.

4.2 A permanence tracking tool is looking at mapping the number of adoptions month on month to provide a reflection of the true picture.

4.3 The results of the district deep dives will be given at the next meeting.

5. Information Reports

5.1 Mrs Allen asked for confirmation that Health partners have signed up to the Improvement Programme. Mrs Whittle reported that Lorraine Goodsell, Director, Commissioning Child Health NHS Kent and Medway, and Helen

Jones, Specialist Children's Services Head of Commissioning are driving forward a jointly commissioned CAMHS service and performance will be measured by the appropriate council committee.

5.2 Donna Shkalla will report to Donna Marriott and Penny Davies concerns over dissemination of information around preventative work with partner agencies.

Dates of future meetings

Agenda Setting*	Time	Meeting	Time	
12 April	4 pm	26 April 2011	12.30	Waterton Lee
3 May	11 am	17 May	4 pm	Swale 3
7 June	4 pm	22 June	9 am	Medway
6 July	3.30 pm	13 July	3 pm	Swale 3
27 July	10 am	25 August	11 am	Swale 3
31 August	2 pm	20 September	2 pm	Medway room

Minutes of the Children's Service Improvement Panel
Meeting Held: 13 July 2011 15:00 Swale 3

Present:

Mrs Whittle (Chair)
Mrs Allen
Mr Christie
Mr Cubitt
Mr Lake
Mrs Waters
Mr Wells

Officers:

Malcolm Newsam
Peter Bole
Debra Exall
Donna Marriott
Fiona Maycock (Clerk)
Michelle Pennellier
Donna Shkalla

Apologies:

Mrs Dean
Miss Hohler

1. Previous Minutes

1.1 Donna Shkalla confirmed that referral data requested at the previous meeting was included with the papers.

1.2 Mrs Whittle informed Members that reports on the joint procurement with Health of a Community Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) model and a new Integrated Children's System (ICS) would proceed to Cabinet on 18th July 2011.

1.3 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the last meeting.

2. Integrated Children's System Progress Report

2.1 Peter Bole gave a presentation on the progress against the two Improvement Plan targets relating to the Integrated Children's System (ICS). **These slides will be distributed after the meeting.**

2.2 The issues raised from the Price Waterhouse Cooper report were outlined. A new team with a mix of expertise is working together to focus on improving technical, infrastructure and delivery elements of the current ICS.

2.3 Peter Bole confirmed that an OJEU advert was placed on 1st July for a new ICS and the procurement process is likely to last until September.

2.4 Mr Christie raised concerns over the different needs of users across Kent. Mrs Whittle emphasised the importance of finding an ICS which requires all staff to adhere to one way of working. Peter Bole explained that there are two types of system; prescriptive systems force the user to complete the process in a set way and others allow authorities to design elements themselves. Continually making improvements to the current ICS contributed to the system's weaknesses. Mr Newsam emphasised the importance of

instilling procedural rigour into a consistent way of practice. Mrs Whittle stated Kent should not be innovators in this area but procure a system with a large client base which is known to work well and permit problems to be rectified more speedily.

2.5 Mr Christie asked what the likely cost will be. Peter Bole stated that the anticipated cost of full implementation, including licence fees (estimated at £400,000), installation, training and migration of information is between £1.2 million and £1.5 million. Mrs Whittle advised that Capita would wish to assist with the migration of data.

2.6 Mrs Allen asked whether there is evidence to show inputting times have reduced with the improvements to the ICS. Donna Marriott replied that there are statistics showing improvements in the speed of running the system. She stated that the average time is currently 1 hour to complete a referral which is a significant improvement. Mr Newsam added that compliance rates are increasing with the improvements being made.

2.7 Mr Wells asked whether information is available regarding the Ofsted rating of other authorities who use the Capita One ICS. **Officers agreed to investigate this.** The rating of ICS includes the delivery, management and use of the system. Peter Bole confirmed that when authorities are going out to tender for a new ICS, Capita are no longer bidding, which indicates they do not have a long-term future in this particular market.

2.8 Mr Newsam explained the importance of getting strong leadership to manage the implementation of the new ICS. Mrs Whittle added that gaining user feedback and allowing an admin support base for practitioners is critical to success. Mr Lake also highlighted the importance of senior people being able to zoom in to team level information.

2.9 Members thanked Peter Bole for his presentation and asked for further updates to come to the Panel in due course.

3. Corporate Director's Progress Report

3.1 Mr Newsam reported that fantastic progress continued to be made on the number of Initial and Core Assessments out of timescale since the report was written. For the new year to date, 72% of assessments have been completed within timescales, currently exceeding the target of 67%.

3.2 Mr Christie noted the encouraging progress but asked how confident can we be that staff are dealing with the current work and not allowing new backlogs to build up. Mr Newsam replied that following the District "Deep Dives" he was indeed confident that new work was being progressed in a timely fashion. The trackers have really helped improve management grip and keep staff on top of deadlines and staff feel a millstone has been lifted from them. When the peripatetic team and the PCAS workers are no longer working on the backlog, the existing staff will cope with the workload. The

other dimension is to ensure the establishment matches the demand, and we have the right number of social workers in the right locations. A report on this will be brought to the next Panel meeting.

3.4 Mr Wells warned that when the new ICS system was brought in and data was migrated, this would have a temporary impact on productivity.

4. Core Strategy Updates

4.1 Debra Exall reported that there was now audit evidence that the County Duty Team was bringing consistency to decision-making and was reducing referrals to Duty and Initial Inspection Teams and there were now plans for it to expand to take on all contacts relating to children's referrals in the near future.

4.2 A consultant has been contracted to support the development of the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy so this report will be brought to the Panel in October.

4.3 On supervision, Mr Wells questioned the need to bring the level of supervisor down to Senior Practitioner level. Donna Marriott explained that a balance needed to be struck between experience and need; some Senior Practitioners had the capacity and experience to be supervisors, and this was a sensible solution to a situation where so many supervisors had too many people to supervise.

4.4 Following the tabling of a report from Rob Semens on Core Task 7, Mr Christie asked what the current turnover of staff is. **Rob Semens will contact Members with an answer to this.**

4.5 Mrs Whittle asked for a robust marketing campaign for experienced social workers and a **report on the impacts already felt to be brought to the next meeting.**

5. Performance and Quality Assurance Frameworks

5.1 Donna Marriott and Donna Shkalla presented the Performance and Quality Assurance Frameworks, including an explanation of the online audit tool. **The slides will be emailed to Members after the meeting.**

5.2 Mrs Whittle asked for Internal Audit to be included in the process of quality assurance. For example, they could have a role to audit the quality of the audits being done as this would not require social work knowledge.

5.3 Donna Marriott explained the complex sampling arrangements to ensure fair representation of cases. The pilot will run for a few months to ensure smooth operation, involving all managers and supervisors from the Corporate Director down, with the view to expanding to all social work staff and preventative services in the future.

5.4 Mrs Waters asked about the impact on morale if staff are regularly graded inadequate. Donna Shkalla confirmed that the ratings will highlight capability issues, but tools will be available to address this.

5.5 Mr Christie asked whether trade unions have been involved. Mr Newsam confirmed that they had been invited to contribute but had not yet responded to his letter.

5.6 Members thanked Donna Shkalla and Donna Marriott for their presentation and felt reassured that the service was responding positively to Ofsted's criticism around the lack of frameworks and embedding of a performance management culture.

6. Data Reports

6.1 Donna Shkalla drew Members attention to the referral data that was circulated with the performance reports.

7. Improvement Plan Highlight and Exception Reports

7.1 No actions to take.

8. For Information Reports

8.1 **Agreed that future meetings need to focus on one or two strategic issues.**

Dates of future meetings

Agenda Setting*	Time	Meeting	Time	
12 April	4 pm	26 April 2011	12.30	Waterton Lee
3 May	11 am	17 May	4 pm	Swale 3
7 June	4 pm	22 June	9 am	Medway
6 July	3.30 pm	13 July	3 pm	Swale 3
27 July	10 am	25 August	11 am	Swale 3
31 August	2 pm	20 September	2 pm	Medway room

By: Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children’s Services
 Malcolm Newsam, Interim Corporate Director of Families & Social Care

To: Specialist Children’s Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 28 September 2011

Subject: **CHILDREN’S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN – QUARTERLY UPDATE**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

Provides Members with an update on progress on the Children’s Services Improvement Plan and outlines the focus for the next six months.

Recommendations

The Specialist Children’s Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- (a) NOTE the achievement of the August Improvement Notice Targets
- (b) NOTE the very significant progress that has been made since the last quarterly report
- (c) COMMENT ON the draft Phase 2 Improvement Plan

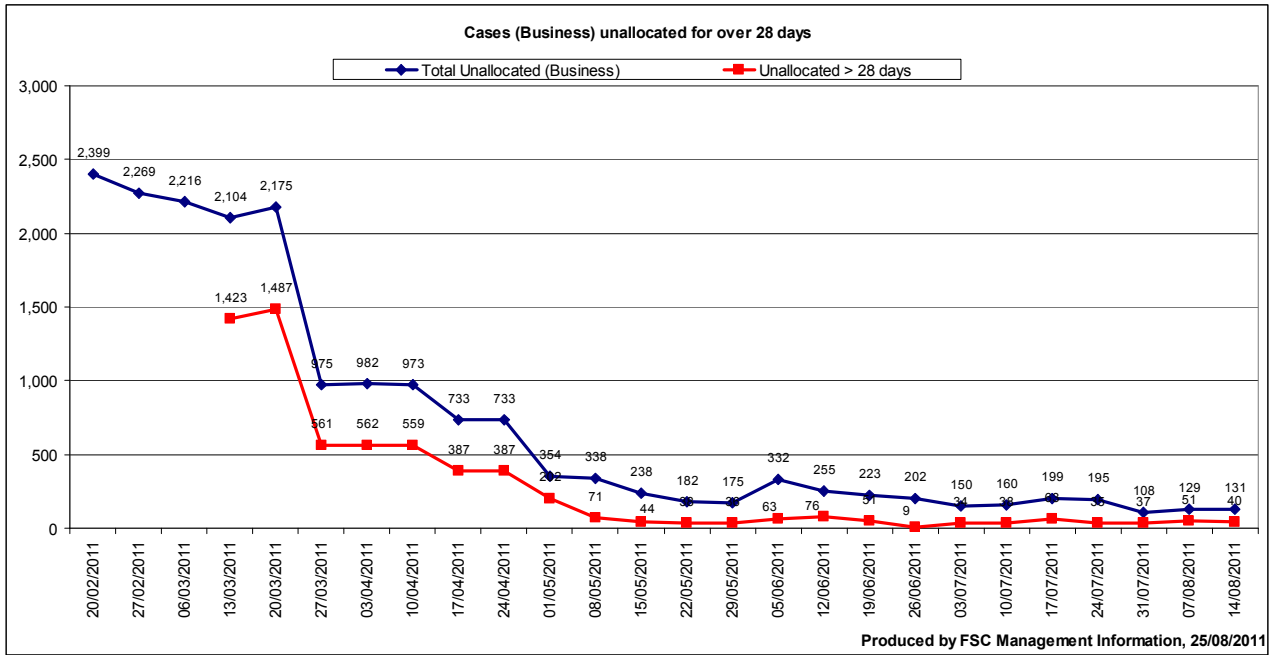
Introduction

1. (1) This is the second regular report to the Specialist Children’s Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress made in implementing the Improvement Plan. The previous report, in May 2011, outlined the 10 Core Tasks which were the focus for the first six months of transformation, and summarised the actions taken to date.

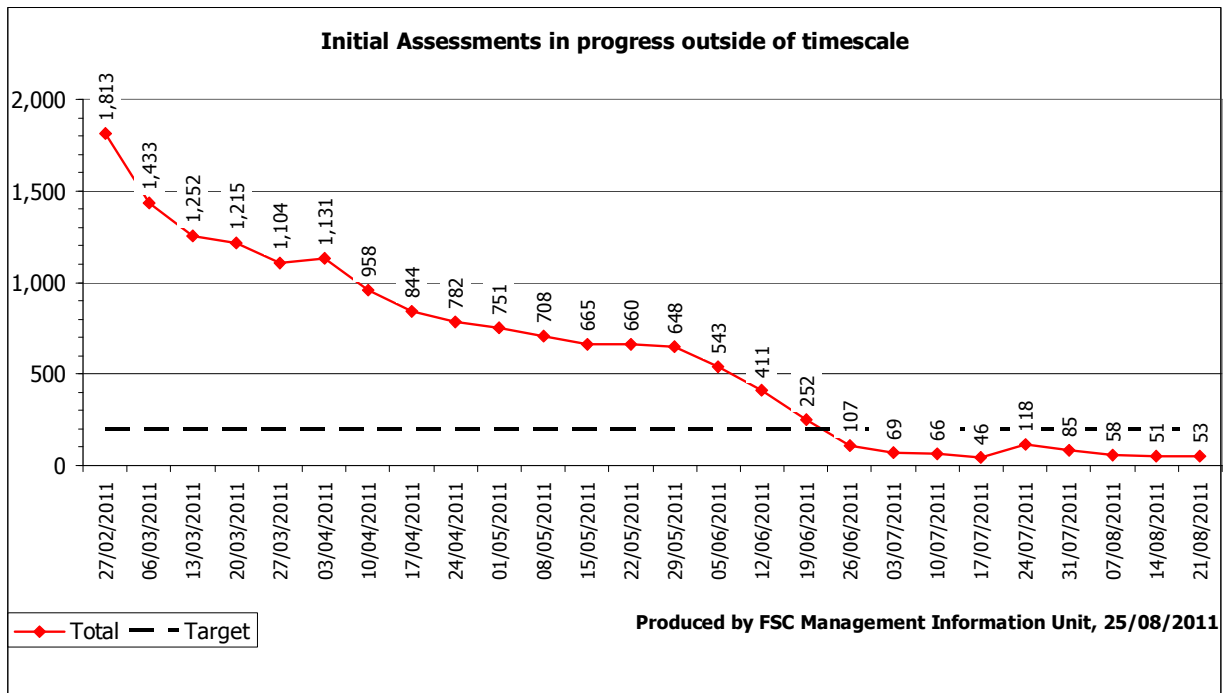
Achievement of the August Improvement Notice Targets

2. (1) Three of the Improvement Notice targets had a deadline of August and all three have been met, which is a tremendous achievement. The enormous effort put into reducing the backlogs of cases - bringing in the peripatetic team, diverting the Parenting Capacity Team staff, relentless tracking progress through daily/weekly/monthly/quarterly monitoring reinforced at district meetings and through the Deep Dive exercises – has delivered the required results.

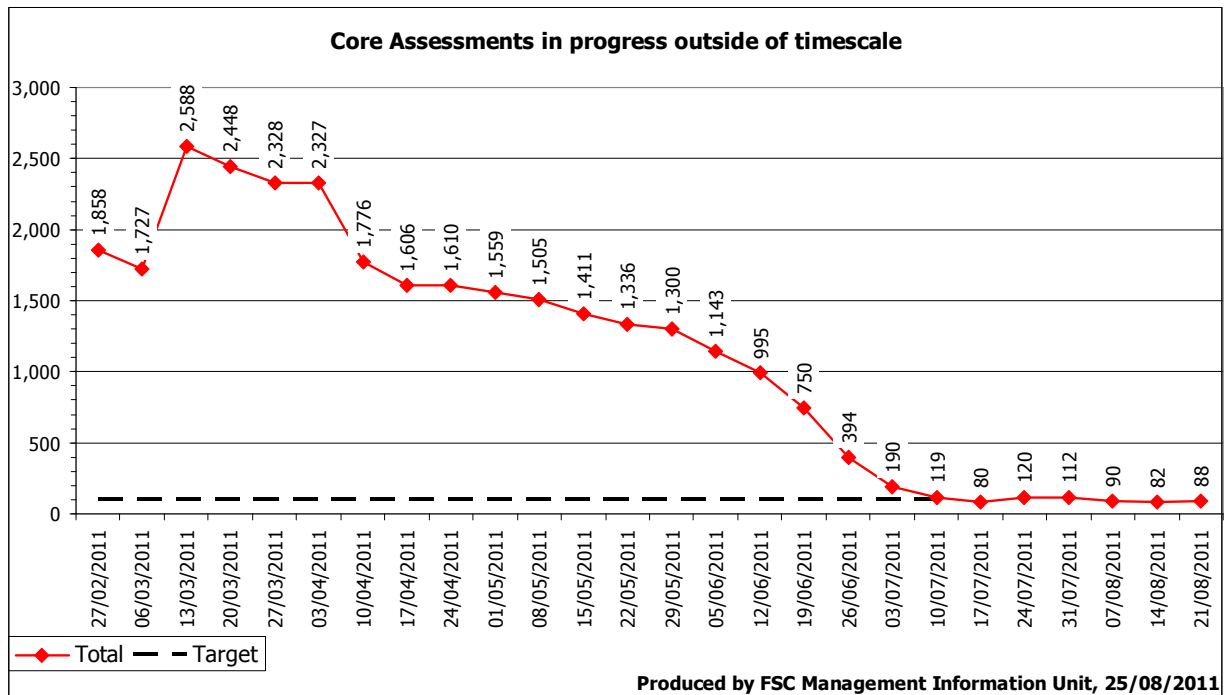
- (i) The first Improvement Notice target was to have no more than 100 unallocated cases over 28 days. Unallocated cases have been reduced from 2,633 to 131 (on 14 August), of which only 40 have been unallocated for more than 28 days, as the graph below shows.



(ii) Initial Assessments out of timescale have been reduced from 2,208 to 53 (on 21 August), easily overshooting the Improvement Notice target of 200.



(iii) Even the most challenging target - to have no more than 100 Core Assessments out of timescale - has been achieved as the graph below shows.



Other Progress

3. (1) We are now also able to demonstrate a significant improvement in the timeliness of our Initial Assessments. Our current year performance (1 April 2011 to 31 July 2011) is 74% (5% above our Improvement Notice target of 69% for 2011/12).

(2) The timeliness of core assessments is still masked by the closing of the large numbers that have been out of timescale. When we filter these out the underlying performance much stronger - 89% of assessments due were completed on time.

(3) The focus on tackling the backlog has also brought dividends for throughput – caseloads are substantially reduced, and there is a more disciplined approach to case management including setting target end dates to avoid drift. Numbers of children in need are starting to reduce. A Throughput Improvement Programme has been established to ensure that throughput is maintained and backlogs do not build up again. The peripatetic (interim) team of social workers have worked through the backlogs of unallocated cases during their six month contract and we will ensure that backlogs do not build up again on their departure at the end of their contract in October. The Throughput Improvement Programme will help to avoid a similar situation arising again and enable social workers to have manageable caseloads.

(4) The Performance Management Framework has been implemented, and processes around performance management have been strengthened. Heads of Service now receive daily information on cases out of timescale or unallocated, and weekly and monthly reports are scrutinised by managers and acted upon. The Duty Tracker is embedded in all Duty and Initial Assessment Teams (DIATs), which has greatly strengthened the management grip on new cases coming through the

system. The Deep Dive meetings held in June resulted in a step change in performance and will be repeated in the autumn.

(5) The Quality Assurance Framework has also been approved, and from August every social work manager from the Corporate Director down to Principal Social Worker will audit a case a month. The DIAT Improvement Programme comprises a combination of written guidance and protocols (“inspection-ready” packs issued to each DIAT, Duty Manual, Practice Standards, Transfer Protocol, Duty Tracker) with ‘hands on’ mentoring and guidance, and will be completed by November.

(6) The new County Duty Team of temporary social workers went live on 12th May, dealing with inter-agency referrals and domestic violence notifications. It has already had an impact in terms of consistent, better quality decision-making and has reduced referrals substantially. It is shortly to be expanded to take on all children’s phone contacts, and will form part of the planned multi-agency referral unit being established in January.

(7) To improve working conditions for staff, every site has been visited, issues identified and reviewed, and priorities agreed with local managers and Heads of Service. A planned programme of costed actions is being implemented, with a number of quick wins already making a difference. On the technology front, the tender for a new Integrated Children’s System is progressing well, and in the meantime improvements have been made to the network and to the memory capacity of individual laptops/PCs.

(8) Considerable work has been undertaken to implement a new and strategic approach to commissioning. The Families and Social Care Directorate Management Team has approved an overall framework that will ensure local commissioners are operating within a clear strategic framework, on the basis of specific outcomes, as well as a thorough understanding of local need.

(9) The senior management group within Specialist Children’s Services have now been through an assessment centre (based on the Kent competencies combined with a leadership survey that identified gaps and weakness). Following this, a programme is being developed to promote the demonstration of competencies, required behaviours and expectations of leaders. Guidance is also being drawn up around management responsibilities, accountabilities and competencies. Communications have also been improved with weekly bulletins, ‘Jenny’s Journal’ a regular communication from the Lead Member and the development of the Children’s Services Improvement Plan (CSIP) hub on KNet to give staff a clear sense of direction and purpose. The member-led Corporate Parenting Panel has also urged that social workers are properly recognised and discussions are ongoing with a local newspaper group to establish a “Social Worker of the Year” award for Kent.

(10) The compelling offer, which aims to bring trained and experienced social workers into Kent, retain our existing experienced staff, and recruit more staff from within Kent (returners and ‘grow your own’) was approved by the County Council, and is being implemented. A new 3 month campaign is being launched at

the end of August aimed at recruiting experienced social workers, Principal Social Workers and Team Leaders.

(11) Corporate parenting governance arrangements have been considerably strengthened since the Ofsted report. The all-party Children's Service Improvement Panel meets on a monthly basis and the Corporate Parenting Panel meets quarterly. The Lead Member has visited 11 of the 12 District Children's Social Services offices and discussed delivery of the Improvement Plan with managers and front line social workers. Members have also signed up to the Shadow a Social Worker scheme and are providing feedback to Council Committees and the Lead Members about their experiences. Members have also attended two corporate parenting training sessions in July and further dates have been set for the 7th, 21st, 25th and 26th of October.

Next Steps

4. (1) Whilst it is right to celebrate the achievements of the last six months, Cabinet should be under no illusions about the challenges ahead. There is still a great deal of work to be done to meet the aspiration for Kent County Council to be excellent in terms of safeguarding children and providing services to looked after children. Now that the backlog has been addressed, throughput improved and caseloads reduced we can focus on quality and sustainability, ensuring that the Council has a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people.

(2) A Phase 2 Improvement Plan has been drawn up that builds on but moves on from the original Improvement Plan. The key themes are:

- (i) Maintain the timeliness of assessments and ensure all cases are allocated appropriately
- (ii) Raise the quality of casework
- (iii) Put in place a range of preventative services to avoid unnecessary family breakdown, with particular focus on high level family support, services for vulnerable adolescents, and more effective use of the Common Assessment Framework
- (iv) Improve care planning and outcomes for looked after children
- (v) Reduce the numbers of looked after children, including increasing adoptions and implementing the recommendations of the independent review of the adoption service
- (vi) Reduce the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans
- (vii) Deliver services through a locality-based integrated structure which is fit for purpose, strongly managed, and staffed by experienced and competent social workers.

(3) A working draft of the Phase Two Improvement Plan is shown at Appendix A for discussion and comment.

Financial Implications

5. (1) £3.5m has been allocated to support the improvement programme this year, in addition to the costs of implementing the workforce strategy.

Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

6. (1) Improving Children's Services following the Ofsted Inspection last autumn has been identified as the Council's top priority.

Legal Implications

7. (1) The Secretary of State has the power to issue a statutory intervention notice if he or she deems this is required to secure the necessary improvements within a failing service.

Equality Impact Assessments

8. (1) There are no issues to report on this.

Risk and Business Continuity Management

9. (1) A risk register has been established and maintained, and is reported regularly to the external Improvement Board.

Key strategic risks we need to mitigate are:

- Numbers of Looked After Children may continue to increase with impacts on staffing resources and outcomes for children
- There may continue to be an increase in the number of children subject to a Protection Plan due to low thresholds, shortages in preventative services and inadequate multi-agency working
- Recruiting and retaining experienced staff and managers
- Untoward safeguarding incidents

Consultation and Communication

10. (1) The programme will continue to communicate with staff, managers, KCC Members, the Children's Trust and the External Improvement Board on improvement achievements and challenges.

(2) Staff engagement has also been a major focus of programme communications, with weekly progress bulletins from the Interim Corporate Director issued to Specialist Children's Services employees and the development of an improvement intranet site providing staff with all relevant consultation and communication information relating to the improvements in a 'one stop shop'. The Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services also provides staff with a journal update on a monthly basis.

Sustainability and Rural Proofing Implications

11. (1) There are no sustainability and rural proofing implications.

Conclusion

12. (1) There has been very significant progress in key areas across the Improvement Plan as a whole and staff and colleagues are to be commended for achieving this rapid and successful transformation. However, there is still considerable work to do, with some complex challenges to address. The Phase 2 Improvement Plan will re-focus our efforts to ensure that this rapid improvement is maintained over the next six months and beyond.

Recommendations

13. (1) The Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- (a) NOTE the achievement of the August Improvement Notice Targets
- (b) NOTE the very significant progress that has been made since the last quarterly report
- (c) COMMENT ON the draft Phase Two Improvement Plan.

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Background documents:

Appendix A: Draft Phase Two Improvement Plan

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Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

Putting Children First

Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

Phase 2: September 2011 – February 2012

DRAFT



Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan endorsed by the Kent Improvement Board in April 2011 sets out the overall context, governance arrangements, and planned actions by partners in Kent to improve services to children and support looked after children following the OFSTED inspection in autumn 2011. In that Plan, we identified 10 Core Tasks which would be the focus of the first six months. Our progress against those core tasks are set out below:

Core Task	Progress
1. Bring in a peripatetic team to reduce the number of unallocated cases, reduce numbers of incomplete assessments and restore timely assessment timescales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peripatetic Team recruited, trained and operational from early May. • Team have successfully reduced the assessment backlog, and continue to undertake short-term work • Robust exit strategy devised. Handover date agreed, 11 November 2011.
2. Strengthening the quality of work undertaken in the assessment teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty and initial Assessment Team improvement Programme, combining written guidance and protocols (“inspection ready” packs, Duty Manual, Practice Standards, Transfer Protocol, Duty Tracker) issued to all DIATs. • “Hands on” advice and coaching successfully implemented and forecast for completion by mid-November
3. Restoring throughput, pruning caseloads and reducing the number of children in need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backlog of Initial and Core Assessments cleared (through deployment of peripatetic team, diversion of the Parenting Capacity Advisory Service and focus on staff across Specialist Children’s Services with ‘step downs’ of Children in Need cases to preventative services). • Timeliness of assessments restored. • Caseloads reduced caseloads from 11625 on 23/01/11 to 10438 on 28/08/11, with numbers of Children in Need are starting to reduce (there were 836923 CIN cases on 23/01/2011; figure reduced to 6884 on 28/08/11)

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<p>4. Making structural changes for handling initial assessments, fixing Kent contact and assessment service and introducing specialist looked after children teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Duty Team established to take on Inter-Agency Referrals and Domestic Abuse Notifications; establishment shortly to expand to take all child phone contacts and consultations. • Model developed to identify how many staff are required in each district. • Initial plans developed to establish specialist LAC teams. • Wider restructuring needed to make specialist Children's Services fit for purpose; to be addressed in Phase 2 Plan.
<p>5. Strengthening first line management accountability and the quality of supervision through training, development and audit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision policy re-issued to all staff. • All managers gone through a comprehensive supervision training programme. • Analysis undertaken on management capacity and spans of control. • Full-scale supervision audit has been completed; action plan is being developed to structure remedial actions.
<p>6. Implementing an effective management information and quality assurance framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management and Quality Assurance Frameworks approved and implemented. • Daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly reporting has created a culture with far greater awareness of deadlines and targets, and stronger management grip. • From August, every social work manager from the Corporate Director down are undertaking a case audit every month.
<p>7. Filling resource gaps by more effective recruitment and putting in place a compelling workforce strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compelling workforce strategy approved in May and implemented. • Recruitment campaign launched over the next six months will target experienced social workers, team leaders and principal social workers. • Vacancy rates are slowly reducing; it is expected that the

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<p>8. Building an effective commissioning framework and range of preventive services</p>	<p>target 10% will be achieved within timescale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families & Social Care Directorate Management Team approved an overall framework that will ensure local commissioners are operating within a clear strategic framework on the basis of specific outcomes, as well as a thorough understanding of local need. • Early Intervention & Prevention Strategy is being redrafted to be more Kent-specific and will be completed in autumn 2011. • Specification of services undertaken to ensure they are consistent with the strategic priorities, particularly focusing on intensive family support and targeted adolescent services. • Placement Support Service (one point of contact for social workers needing to find external placements for looked after children) is working well and is being expanded to include residential placements.
<p>9. Strengthening the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) and the Kent Children's Trust (KCT) arrangements, Common Assessment Framework and threshold arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KSCB and KCT have been reviewed and recommendations are being implemented to make them more effective. • The number of CAFs carried out is rising • CAF Action Plan is being implemented. • Threshold criteria have been widely promulgated • Extensive training and workshops for all agencies involved in CAF developed and implemented • Plan developed to convene additional district-based sessions via the local Children's Trust.
<p>10. Providing front line teams with suitable accommodation, ICT arrangements, infrastructure and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every site housing social work staff has been reviewed and outstanding issues identified. • Prioritised works agreed with local managers and Heads of Service. • Planned programme of costed actions is being implemented

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	<p>with immediate works already making a difference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvements made to the network and the memory capacity of individual laptops and PCs• Urgent action to tender a replacement Integrated Children's System is being undertaken.
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Six months on, the Improvement Plan needs to be re-focussed on quality and sustainability. The themes for the next six months are therefore:

1. Maintain the timeliness of assessments and ensure all cases are allocated appropriately
2. Raise the quality of assessment casework, and recruit and retain staff with the appropriate competencies
3. Put in place a range of preventative services to avoid unnecessary family breakdown
4. Improve care planning and outcomes for looked after children
5. Reduce the numbers of looked after children
6. Reduce the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans
7. Deliver services through a locality-based integrated structure which is fit for purpose and strongly managed

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Priority 1 – Maintain the timeliness of assessments and ensure all cases are allocated appropriately				
Priority Lead – Malcolm Newsam				
Outcome – The excellent progress made up to September 2011 is maintained or improved.				
Ref	Actions	Timescale	Delivery Lead	Targets & Measures
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly performance monitoring of timescale activity • Weekly review of unallocated cases • District specific remedial actions taken on a weekly basis where required • ICS practice reviewed to ensure best practice is reflected on the system • Ongoing work with Central Duty Team and partners to ensure appropriate application of thresholds 	1 September 2011 weekly/monthly monitoring	Heads of Children's Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 69% of Initial Assessments, 80.4% of Core Assessments to be completed within timescales • No more than 100 cases to remain unallocated over 28 days (current performance = 39 cases unallocated over 28 days, 07/09/11) • Targets set to monitor number of assessments in progress but out of timescale • Month on month increase in assessments judged adequate/good in monthly audits.

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Priority 2 – Focus on raising the quality of assessment and casework				
Priority Lead – Donna Marriott				
2.1 Outcome – Deliver a robust programme to improve the quality of assessment and casework, and provide qualitative and quantitative information about the impact of services on outcomes for children and young people.				
Ref	Actions	Timescale	Delivery Lead	Targets & Measures
2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement mandatory cross-county Quality of Practice audits to be undertaken by all managers • Follow up processes developed and monitored for all cases judged inadequate • Children are seen and their views recorded in all assessments • Review current assessment templates • Develop and disseminate practice standards for practitioners (CIN/CP/LAC) • Implement quality standard leaflet for parents • Review workforce development strategy • Focus training and support on improved analysis in assessment • Introduce regular practitioner workshops by district • CIN Procedures to be strengthened and re-launched • Public Law Outline processes strengthened to ensure timely intervention – practice protocols to be strengthened and relaunched 	30 September 2011, monthly	Donna Marriott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 120 audits per month achieved across the County • Results and follow up reported monthly to the Specialist Children’s Services DivMT and quarterly to the Families & Social Care DMT • User feedback on the delivery of practice standards to be collated and used to inform delivery protocols. • Verification of improved quality to be evidenced over time (specific targets to be developed as the programme embeds). • Performance in terms of numbers of children with a CIN plan improves • Improvement in evaluation of social work training • Numbers of children with a CP plan reduces • Numbers of LAC reduce

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2.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake Mock inspections of Duty and Initial Assessment Teams which were judged inadequate previously Districts to address any points of concern/areas requiring improvement; remedial action to be recorded and evidenced 	1 September 2011 - 31 October 2011	Donna Marriott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mock inspections find children are adequately safeguarded – quality of practice audits ranked adequate to good increases Ofsted Unannounced Inspection positive.
2.1.3	District-level improvement plans to be revised and sharpened to reflect local performance issues	30 September 2011; review at monthly Performance Board from 31 October 2011	Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans in place with evidence of remedial action following results of the DIAT improvement programme, Deep Dive scrutiny, the mock DIAT inspections. District plans to be monitored by SCS Performance Board on a monthly basis in-line with Performance Management Framework stipulations. Monthly performance reports evidence improvement. Quality of practice audits ranked adequate to good increased.
2.1.4	Regular thematic audits undertaken on specific practice areas as defined by QA Framework timetable	Rolling Programme to be drawn up by 31 October 2011	Donna Marriott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular, robust reports delivered to SCSDivMT, FSC DMT which include recommendations for remedial actions. Remedial action is taken within clearly defined timescales. Performance Sub-Group of the

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				KSCB to increase understanding and identification of solutions.
2.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KSCB to establish multi-agency audits as part of the KSCB Quality and Effectiveness Framework • Proposal to the Board that one audit should be conducted per area per quarter (3 per quarter in total) • Effective audit tools and processes to be developed • QEF subgroup to be established to manage the audit process • Performance monitoring and analysis reports to be developed and refined with support of C4EO consultants 	1 December 2011 – 31 March 2012	Penny Davies, Maggie Blyth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan developed • Audits timetabled • Findings reported to KSCB on a quarterly basis • Analysis review of performance data by the KSCB and subgroup will inform single agency audits and increase the timeliness and effectiveness of work undertaken in response to identified areas of poor partnership working.
2.1.6	<p>Monitor and take action to secure appropriate caseload levels for all social workers by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing individual social work caseloads and complete work/transfer/close cases as required • Identify capacity needs and address as required • Independently review a sample of social work managers' caseloads 	1 March 2011 (monthly review)	Alastair Pettigrew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting indicates caseload levels are a maximum of 25 cases per caseholder in each district area
2.1.7	Obtain feedback from staff, partner agencies and service users and use their views to inform the improvement actions including the re-design of the service	1 November 2011 – 31 May 2012	Suzanna Darling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback gathered from service users (including children and young people) and partners; feedback used when improvement actions are being undertaken and when services

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				are being developed or commissioned
2.2 Outcome – Excellent supervision ensures the quality of casework improves.				
2.2.1	<p>Action plan to be developed and implemented in response to the full audit of supervision to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of supervision practice guidance to compliment current supervision policy • Commissioning of supervision training for District Managers • Further develop observation of supervision practice as part of support to managers • Development of practice standards for supervision developed and implemented • Supervision Tool to be rolled out and embedded across the service to allow for the active performance management of cases and of staff delivery. • All actions to include clear recommendations and timescales for implementation. • Put in place appropriate spans of control to ensure compliance with supervision policy • Develop District based reporting to enhance accountability 	31 October 2011 - 31 March 2012 (review)	Michelle Woodward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full audit undertaken (complete) • Targets to be incorporated into district plans. • Evidence of improvement in the quality of supervision identified in QoP monthly Audit • Deep dive audit to be repeated in 12 months to confirm progress • Feedback from supervising managers in respect of the quality of their own supervision
2.3 Outcome – Specialist Children’s Services and its partners are well prepared for the next full Ofsted inspection.				
2.3.1	Develop an “inspection ready programme” to prepare for the next full Ofsted inspection.	30 September 2011; rolling programme	Donna Marriott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme is implemented, and is effective

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Priority 3 – Develop a range of preventative services to avoid unnecessary family breakdown				
Priority Lead – Mark Lobban				
3.1 Outcome – Deliver the actions set out in the Early Intervention & Prevention Strategy in order to ensure children’s needs are met at the earliest opportunity and families get the support they need quickly.				
Ref	Actions	Timescale	Delivery Lead	Targets & Measures
3.1.1	Commission high level family support/family intervention in each district in accordance with the strategic framework and needs assessments.	1 October 2011 - 1 April 2012	Helen Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service specifications in place, services procured with clear contract and performance management arrangements • Impact measures achieved
3.1.2	Commission adolescent intervention services in accordance with the strategic framework, the Adolescent Strategy and needs assessments.	1 October 2011 - 1 April 2012	Helen Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service specifications in place, services procured with clear contract and performance management arrangements • Impact measures achieved
3.1.3	Centralise commissioning of all tier two and three services (links to 3.2.2 below)	1 September 2011 - 31 January 2012	Helen Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service specifications in place, services procured with clear contract and performance management arrangements • Impact measures achieved
3.1.4	Undertaken an options appraisal to assess the optimum way of delivering an outcomes-based contract for Children’s Centre provision across the county.	1 August 2011 – 30 April 2012	Helen Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes framework in place; options appraisal completed and future commissioning proposals agreed
3.2 Outcome – The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process operates effectively: the number of CAFs increases, there is greater and more effective participation by partner agencies, and the impact of CAFs is improved in terms of ensuring that children with additional needs are responded to before their needs become acute and require specialist children’s services. Clear baselines and outcomes to be put in place around delivery for every Team Around the Child.				

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Ref	Actions	Timescale	Delivery Lead	Targets & Measures
3.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAF arrangements are strengthened to ensure that children with additional needs are responded to before their needs become acute and require specialist children services. • Review of the access and allocation processes (screening and Single Point of Access) to ensure efficient and timely identification of Team Around the Child/Family • Transfer procedures between CSS and CAF to be embedded to ensure that children and families are effectively supported in the community when they are closed to CSS • Access and allocation arrangements are streamlined and guidance and protocols developed and disseminated • Establish a baseline of the time taken from the CAF assessment to the first TAC and set guideline timescales • Identify top 100 families that require a TAC and put in place TAC arrangements • Establish baseline for number of cases being transferred to TACs following CSS case closure and identify targets to reduce re-referral rates for these cases 	31 October 2011 - 31 March 2012 (review)	Nikki Patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in understanding and confidence of partner agencies in applying the Threshold Criteria • Increase in total number of CAFs by 25% in a ratio of 58.9 per 10,000 over the 2011/12 financial year in comparison to 2010/11 • Reduction of contacts into social care • Reduction in the conversion of contacts to referral • Reduction in the proportion of referrals going on to Initial Assessment • Positive feedback from providers and services e.g. schools that children's needs are being met. • Quarterly multi-agency performance management report to be sent to SCS POSC.
3.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and introduce method for 	30 September	Nikki Patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Boards identified and

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	<p>collection of outcome information against CAF action plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly monitoring of CAF update and outcomes is reported to the Improvement Board, and key Partner boards. • User-friendly CAF recording system to be included in ICS replacement and rolled out across KCC and partner agencies. • CAF/TAC audit on outcomes to be undertaken to inform the revised CAF Action Plan • Outcome information to be monitored to ensure that the CAF process is making a difference to children and families 	2011 onwards		<p>in receipt of reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting proforma agreed • Regular monthly reports produced • Reports reviewed and monitored by the KSCB
3.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Early Intervention and Preventative Strategy developed outlining the role of universal, targeted and specialist services and is clear about when a CAF should be completed. • Above effectively disseminated across partners communicated using a variety of methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan implemented 	31 October 2011 - 31 March 2012 (review)	Marisa White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and partner agencies have clear guidance about when CAFs should be completed • Key partners receive and adhere to Strategy framework

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Priority 4 – Improve care planning and outcomes for Looked After Children				
Priority Lead – Alastair Pettigrew				
4.1 Outcome - Care planning is effective, with rigorous planning for permanence. Looked after children and young people receive the appropriate level of support and services, through effective multi-agency intervention, which they report is responsive to their needs. The health needs and well being of looked after children and young people are assessed and result in appropriate intervention. Educational outcomes for looked after children and young people are improved. Members and senior officers undertake their corporate parenting responsibilities effectively.				
4.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop specialist social work teams for looked after children to ensure that appropriate priority is given to LAC • Undertake an audit of quality of care plans for LAC. • Review of ICS care plan template to ensure it is fit for purpose and young person friendly 	1 October 2011 – 30 November 2011	Donna Marriott	To be developed with the Head of Safeguarding
4.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Reviewing Officers quality assure the effectiveness of care planning and where appropriate challenge casework decisions or delays • Each review ensures that required actions are in place and exceptions reported to the appropriate manager and escalated where necessary for resolution • Escalation policy developed, implemented and monitored. • Monitor effectiveness of escalation policy and implement recommendations 	1 September 2011 – 1 March 2013 (review)	Donna Marriott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly report by Independent Reviewing Officers service produced and submitted to the Children’s Social Services Management Team for action • Progress on permanence planning, health assessments, core assessments, care plans and Personal Education Plans is measured through performance reporting and demonstrates improvement in key areas

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4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all relevant professionals are able to participate and contribute to planning for Looked after Children in line with their responsibilities • Performance monitoring report on agency attendance to be developed • Clear multi-agency escalation pathway to be developed and managed by the KSCB to ensure cohesive and consistent engagement across agencies 	1 April 2011 – 1 March 2012 (review)	Donna Marriott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant professionals are invited to attend LAC reviews • Agency contribution to be evaluated by an Independent Reviewing Officer service and results/feedback reported to the management of the agency. • Findings to be reflected in quarterly Independent Reviewing Officer report • Concerns regarding lack of agency contribution to be reported and escalated to managers in relevant agencies, where appropriate
4.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure statutory visits are monitored (via monthly/quarterly performance reports), and that there is good recording of information on LAC cases. • Audits of LAC to be conducted on a monthly basis via Quality of Practice Audits • IRO reports produced on a quarterly basis 	30 December 2011 – 30 March 2012 (review)	Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance in relation to stat visits improves and is maintained • Numbers of LAC routinely audited increases • Performance of 16+ provider monitored, evaluated and reports produced
4.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with provider of 16+ service to be reviewed and performance against agreed standards evaluated 	1 January 2011 - 31 March 2012	Helen Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved performance standards • Reduction in 16+ LAC

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4.1.6	<p>Improve health care assessments for LAC, focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of health and dental checks, and referrals ensuring progress chasing systems are embedded • Capacity of providers to deliver against required standards & volumes • Timely data inputting in relation to assessments completed • LAC participation groups/foster carers to be consulted in relation to quality of health assessments across age groups • Focused performance monitoring system to be developed and reviewed on a monthly basis 	1 September 2011 – 31 March 2012 (review), 31 March 2013	Lorraine Goodsell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting demonstrates the % of children in care having health checks has increased to 85% by March 2012; target to be at least maintained up to March 2013 • Performance reporting demonstrates the % of children in care having dental checks has increased to 85% by March 2012; target to be at least maintained up to March 2013
4.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all LAC are given early access to CAMHS provision, when needed and deemed clinically appropriate • Revised CAMHS/LAC Strategy to be developed and implemented to include therapeutic support for foster carers • Progress to be reported in the quarterly LAC performance monitoring report to the KCP Board 	30 September 2011 – 30 April 2012	Lorraine Goodsell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access information shows % of LAC gaining early access to CAMHS services increasing over allotted timeframe. • Foster carers report ease of access
4.1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the attendance and educational attainment of looked after children through the development of 	1 March 2012 (Review)	Tony Doran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reports indicate that children in care's attainment is no more than

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	<p>the Virtual School for Looked After Children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure robust monitoring of Personal Education Plans for every LAC. 			<p>36% points difference Achieving 5 A* - C , 34 % (English L4 KS2) and 33% (Maths L4 KS2) points different to their peers by the end of the academic year 2011/12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reports indicate that the number of Looked After Children who miss 25 days or more days of schooling during the academic year is no more than 11%
4.1.9	Reduce exclusions of Looked after Children	1 March 2012 (Review)	Chris Berry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting indicates the number and length of exclusions reduces for children in care in line with their Kent peers and/or statistical neighbours • Performance reports indicate the percentage of children in care who miss 25 days or more days of schooling during the academic year is no more than 11%
4.1.10	Ensure that appropriate LAC are given Boarding School Placements	1 October 2011 – 1 October 2012	Tony Doran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual School Kent processes and mechanisms to support Boarding School Placements to be devised and implemented
4.1.11	Strengthen voice of LAC in policy procedures and decision-making, as set out in the multi-agency LAC Strategy	1 September 2011 – 30 April 2012	Paul Brightwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing on the findings and framework of the LAC Strategy, LAC policy is revised to incorporate the

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				<p>views of LAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports provide evidence of where the views of children have influenced changes in practice/service development
4.1.12	<p>Plan and deliver a mock inspection of the LAC service to ensure it is ready for the Ofsted inspection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of weakness identified and timely remedial actions agreed and implemented • Changes to working practices and the impacts of these changes to be documented. 	1 November 2011 – 31 January 2012	Donna Marriott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mock inspection delivered and recovery plans in place accordingly. • Service performance evaluated to ascertain areas in need of improvement
4.1.13	<p>Targeted staff training (social work, education and health) to be developed to increase understanding of their roles and responsibilities to contribute to achieving good outcomes for Looked after Children.</p> <p>On line training package developed for use across agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to KCC training suite to be made available to partners across agencies to promote joint training on LAC issues • Training programmes for social workers will be developed to include input from looked after young people and foster carers 	1 November 2011 - 29 June 2012	Michelle Woodward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current looked after children training courses reviewed to ensure the role of corporate parenting is reflected. • Looked After young people are involved in social work training

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4.1.14	Across KCC, raise staff's awareness about their responsibilities towards looked after children.	1 December 2011 – 29 February 2012.	Suzanna Darling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys to gauge levels of current knowledge of LAC and corporate parenting to be undertaken • Corporate parenting and LAC information to be made available and accessible across the organisation, focusing on any 'gaps' identified through engagement activities.
4.1.14	Review of the effectiveness of the new Corporate Parenting Group, Corporate Parenting Panel and Children in Care Council, specifically feedback from Members , children and young people	1 January 2011 – 29 February 2012	Liz Totman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews completed and findings disseminated • Improvements made to address any weaknesses identified
4.1.15	Elected Members and senior officers provided with information to enable them to understand their corporate parenting roles, responsibilities and accountabilities	1 April 2011 – 1 December 2012	Marisa White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked after children Elected Member's pack devised and distributed • Looked after children senior officer briefing prepared and distributed. • Annual evaluation survey to ensure actions have been undertaken and information is adequate • Annual training workshops on Corporate Parenting responsibilities

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Priority 5 – Reduce the numbers of Looked After Children				
Priority Lead – Alastair Pettigrew				
5.1 Outcome – Numbers of looked after children are reduced through a range of actions aimed at achieving better outcomes for children & young people, earlier decisions and earlier intervention. Put in place an Access to Resources Team				
Ref	Actions	Timescale	Delivery Lead	Targets & Measures
5.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place an Access to Resources Team (finding placements, gate keeping and monitoring of placements). • Access to Resource Panels to be set up in all three areas 	1 September 2011 - 1 January 2012 onwards	Helen Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal agreed • Operational panel/s established • Access to Resources Team assembled and implementation • Relevant protocols/procedures in place
5.1.2	<p>Increase the number of adoptions and Special Guardianship Orders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District managers and adoption leads jointly monitor the progress of all children requiring adoption • Independent Reviewing Officers ensure that permanence plans incorporating 'best interest decisions' are in place for all LA by the time of the second LAC review 	30 September 2011 – March 2012; March 2012 – 29 March 2013	Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting monitors the percentage of children adopted • Percentage of children adopted increases to 11% by March 2012 and to 13% over the period 2012-2013
5.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of foster carers and adoptive parents • Survey current foster carers and adoptive parents to gauge how to promote the benefits of taking on these roles • Review the fostering and adoption service's marketing and recruitment strategies to ensure it is effective and fit for purpose • Report on identified areas of 	30 September 2011 – 30 April 2012	Liz Totman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectual promotion of the role of foster carer and adoptive parent • Robust marketing and recruitment strategies which function effectively • Numbers of foster carers and adoptive parents increase

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	<p>weakness and development, with recommendations and timescales for action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add other issues highlighted by Independent Review 			
5.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote the use of the LAC Tracker to ensure it is utilised consistently across all teams and Districts • Placement panels to be set up to monitor progress of any LAC who is not long term linked or placed for permanency • Panels prioritise s20 arrangements by age (oldest first) • LAC, CP and CIN projections to be tracked via monthly performance monitoring reports to reduce the risk of drift and increase throughput 	30 November 2011 – 31 January 2012	Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and monitoring of end dates to be completed • Increase in long terms linkings • Increase in incidence of reunification with birth families • Increase in other forms of permanence e.g.SGO • Performance in relation to HA's and PEPs routinely addressed
5.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce number of children placed with parents • Review all current placements with parents • Develop targets for rates of reduction • Track targets via quarterly performance monitoring reports • Develop revised policy guidance to discourage application for FCO for placement with parents. 	31 October 2011 – 1 January 2012	Donna Marriott, Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in application for revocation • Reduction in LAC placed with parents

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Priority 6 – Reduce the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans				
Priority Lead – Alastair Pettigrew				
6.1 Outcome – Child Protection Plans are only in place when there is a clear need for them. Child protection planning processes are effective, responsive to children and young people’s needs, facilitate multi-agency working, and are robust in ensuring that children are safeguarded.				
Ref	Actions	Timescale	Delivery Lead	Targets & Measures
6.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support implementation of strengthened child protection and CIN planning processes through multi-agency training. (2.3.4 in April plan) • Strengthen and relaunch CIN procedures • Review CIN Plan template 	1 August 2011 – 1 Jan 2012 (Review)	Penny Davies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency training programme developed • Programme implemented • Increased confidence of agencies resulting in CIN plans replacing CP plans where appropriate
6.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of children subject to a child protection plan for 18 months or more. • Policy to be developed requiring a review of every case beyond the third conference (at the 9 month stage) to ensure that robust decisions are made to prevent as many cases as possible from going 	1 September 2011 - 30 November 2011	Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and undertake change promotion work on current cases where children have been subject to a child protection plan for over 18 months • Cohort reduced to below 6% as agreed by Specialist Children’s Services DivMT.

Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

	into conferences beyond 15months.	1 September 2011 - 1 March 2013	Donna Marriott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting monitors the number of children who are progressing towards, or have, a child protection plan for 18 months or more • Information used to inform and develop agreed plan to reduce CPP cohort
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Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

6.1.3	Reduce the number of children who become subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time	1 June 2011 – 1 March 2013	Donna Marriott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with operational managers, produce a report to Specialist Children’s Services DivMT setting out a plan for how to reduce the number of children subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time to below 13.6% • Plan agreed & recommendations implemented • Performance reporting monitors the number of children who are made subject to a plan for a second or subsequent time. • The number of children subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time reduced to below 13.6%
6.1.4	<p>Ensure there is a consistent approach to the application of thresholds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust thresholds to be agreed with CPP conference chairs • Thresholds are consistently applied in CPP conferences • Multi-agency agreement to be obtained on thresholds for taking children off a CPP 	1 October 2011 – 31 May 2012	Alastair Pettigrew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent standards are applied to all CPPs • Agency expectations around thresholds are coherent and constant • The number of children being taken off a CPP increases • Reduction of contacts into social care • Reduction in the conversion of

Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

				contacts to referral • Reduction in the number of referrals going on to Initial Assessment
6.2 Outcome - The Safeguarding Children Board is compliant with statutory requirements, supported by a robust performance framework which enables it to hold agencies to account in ensuring the children of Kent are safeguarded				
6.2.1	Implement the multi-agency audit and performance framework and audit plan	From 1 April 2011 – 1 March 2012 (review)	Penny Davies & partners	• Audit programme implemented and audits carried out in each district • Audit findings reported to KSCB and used to inform multi-agency response to safeguarding

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Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

Priority 7 – Deliver services through a locality-based integrated structure which is fit for purpose and strongly managed

Priority Lead – Jean Imray

7.1 Outcome – Develop an overall structure for Specialist Children’s Services which is fit for purpose and ensures resources are deployed to reflect need and deliver value for money.

Ref	Actions	Timescale	Delivery Lead	Targets & Measures
7.1.1	Develop and secure agreement to implement proposals for restructuring Specialist Children’s Services which will incorporate all the elements set out below (2.2 – 2.6). Proposals need to set out functions, roles, responsibilities, and business processes (e.g. transfer protocols), and use the establishment model to determine distribution of staff.	1 October 2011 - 30 December 2011	Jean Imray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals developed, consulted on and approved
		30 December 2011 - 30 September 2012	Jean Imray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of arrangements

7.2 Outcome – Contacts are dealt with efficiently and effectively, and referrals made to the appropriate service with sufficient information for the right action to be taken.

7.2.1	Phase 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Duty Team configured to take all children’s phone contacts, and responsibility for consultations. • Referrals to be assessed by competent staff and thresholds appropriately applied • Joint strategies to be developed with Police and Housing to reduce inappropriate admissions into care 	1 September 2011 – 30 September 2011	Angela Graham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division of child contacts and consultations to the CDT completed • Numbers of referrals reduced from 22,701 to 16,600 • Greater integration between partner agencies leading to reductions in inappropriate admissions into care
7.2.2	Phase 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Referral Unit is established, incorporating the County Duty Team, dealing with all to CSC regardless of source Phase3	30 September 2011 – 29 February 2012	Angela Graham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce rate of referrals to 533.1 per 10,000 child population • Increase the percentage of referrals that go on to initial assessment from the 2009-

Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Multi Agency Screening Hub modelled on best practice nationally (Munro Review) 			2010 baseline of 46% to 65% (between Jan – March 2012) and an average of at least 65% (over the period 2012-13) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality measure to be established.
7.3 Outcome – Change the role and reduce the number of Duty and Initial Assessment Teams				
Ref	Actions	Timescale	Delivery Lead	Targets & Measures
7.3.1	Given the proposed establishment of the Central Referral Unit, establish and implement appropriate duty and assessment structural arrangements in collaboration with relevant partners, managers and staff.	1 September 2011 - 30 December 2011	Jean Imray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals developed, consulted on Proposals approved
		From January 2012	Jean Imray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of arrangements
7.4 Outcome – Establish specialist Looked After Children teams which ensure that Looked After Children get a good quality service which enables them to achieve their full potential.				
7.4.1	Building on work already done, develop an implementation plan for the establishment of specialist LAC teams, which is synchronised with other planned structural changes within this theme.	30 December 2011	Jean Imray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals developed, consulted on and approved
		1 January 2012 – 31 May 2012	Jean Imray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation
7.5 Outcome – Maintain focus on District delivery, and integrate early intervention and children’s centres with District Management				
7.5.1	Develop proposals and an implementation plan for the role of District teams, including integration of	30 December 2011	Jean Imray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals developed, consulted on and approved

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	early intervention and Children's Centres within District Management. This needs to be synchronised with the other planned structural changes.	1 January 2012 – 30 September 2012	Jean Imray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation
7.6 Outcome – Centralise commissioning, procurement and resource allocation				
7.6.1	Develop an implementation plan for the centralisation of commissioning, procurement and resource allocation, which is synchronised with other planned structural changes.	1 September 2011 - 31 January 2012 1 January 2012 – 30 September 2012	Helen Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals developed, consulted on and approved Full Implementation
7.7 Outcome – Kent recruits and retains a balance of experienced and newly qualified staff, and has a qualified social work vacancy rate of 10% or less.				
7.7.1	Monitor the impact of the recruitment and retention strategy, compelling offer and marketing campaigns to ensure there is adequate capacity to meet workload.	30 September 2011 – 31 March 2011 (review)	Karen Ray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance reports show a consistent reduction of qualified social work vacancy rate to 10% or below 'Temperature checks' conducted to gauge the impact of the compelling offer with staff Bi-monthly reports tracking impact to be submitted to improvement governance bodies
7.8 Outcome – Leaders and managers are clear about expectations of them, and gaps in knowledge and management practice are identified and addressed				
7.8.1	Develop a programme across the organisation to promote competencies expected of leaders and managers.	1 Sep 2011 – 31 March 2012	Karen Ray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme developed (in-line with Kent Manager Programme SORPs) Programme timetable implemented, including evaluation and review.
7.8.2	Validate findings from leadership and	1 June 2011 - 30	Karen Ray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage staff in assessment

Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

	management survey with mandatory questionnaire.	April 2012		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of leadership and management Feedback obtained to inform amendments to leadership and management programme
7.8.3	All senior managers (KR13 and above) to complete 360 assessment based on competency in role	31 May 2011 - 1 Apr 2012	Karen Ray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of senior managers in their continuous professional development (CPD) Findings of assessments used to structure management development plans
7.8.4	Implement individual leadership and management development plans.	1 July 2011 – 1 March 2012	Alastair Pettigrew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual learning and development plans are updated in response to the recommendations of the assessment centre.
7.9 Outcome – Kent’s ICT systems effectively support practitioners and managers to carry out their role. Practitioners and managers are accountable for recording case work decisions and ensuring that this is used to influence decision making.				
7.9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new and accessible Integrated Children’s System is procured and implemented Procedures/practice guidelines that stipulate responsibilities across all levels of the organisation developed and disseminated Review of the function and role of administrative staff in relation to the use of ICS undertaken and capacity implications addressed Comprehensiveness and quality of recorded casework to be assessed 	30 September 2011 – 31 March 2013	ICS Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fit for purpose ICS system is embedded Practitioner and managers roles and responsibilities are clarified The number and quality of recorded casework decisions increases, evidenced in audit findings

Kent Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Plan

	through monthly audits <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Areas of weakness identified to be escalated to managers for action			
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By: Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member, Specialist Children’s Services
 Malcolm Newsam, Interim Corporate Director, Families and Social Care
 Lorraine Goodsell, Director Child Health Commissioning

To: Specialist Children’s Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 28 September 2011

Subject: **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CAMHS) – A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The purpose of this report is to inform and update Members about the progress on the joint commissioning of emotional wellbeing and CAMHS services within Kent and Medway.

Introduction

1. (1) Kent County Council agreed at Cabinet on the 18 July 2011 to:
 - the joint commissioning with NHS Kent and Medway of an Integrated Community CAMHS
 - the alignment of the current Kent County CAMHS funding with the PCT and
 - proceed to the procurement stage the Emotional Wellbeing Services through the Early Intervention and Prevention Multiple Supplier Framework Contract.

(2) NHS Kent and Medway agreed on the 20 July to re-commission current NHS primary and specialist CAMHS services into an Integrated Community CAMHS model. There is also approval to commission these services within an aligned budget and pathway of services with KCC. The model varies slightly in Medway in line with local provision but the whole model is aligned and designed to deliver an improved pathway of care, quicker access to appropriate mental health interventions and improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The development of the service model

2. (1) Significant evidence has identified the need for a system redesign of services in Kent. Consultation has taken place with a number of other Local Authorities that have pioneered the development of a Community CAMHS model. A model for Kent has been developed drawing on the learning from consultation with clinicians and patients across Kent, and from best practice nationally.

(2) The Community CAMHS model integrates the provision of primary and specialist mental health services. A single access point enables responsive triage into the most appropriate intervention. It enables faster access to services and interventions appropriate to need.

(3) The key integrated Community CAMHS Model (see Appendix 1) aims to:

- Ensure children and young people are as healthy as possible
- Focus on prevention, early diagnosis and early intervention to sustain health, wellbeing and independence
- Deliver support as locally as possible
- Provide the most effective treatment and cure
- Provide the right, high quality support for children and young people
- Make best use of resources and provide value for money
- Ensure children, young people and families have a say and influence
- Improve the interface between primary and specialist services and emotional wellbeing
- Improve the transition from child to adult services (18+)

Timetable for procurement

3. (1) The key dates in the procurement timeline for the Emotional Wellbeing (led by KCC) and the Community CAMHS (led by NHS Kent and Medway) are shown in Appendix 2. Further details on progress against this timeline will be provided at the meeting.

(2) Emotional Wellbeing Services will be procured against the Early Intervention and Prevention Multiple Supplier Framework Contract, an outcomes based framework. KCC are the lead agency for this part of the procurement process. There are three 'lots' as follows:

- Lot 1 Emotional Wellbeing Services in educational settings
- Lot 2 Emotional Wellbeing Services in community settings
- Lot 3 Emotional Wellbeing Services to parents, carers and families

(3) The Community CAMHS will be provided by specialist CAMHS professionals and will be a single service integrating Tier 2 (Targeted) and Tier 3 (Specialist) into a Community CAMHS model. NHS Kent and Medway is the lead agency for this part of the procurement process. The service model is a single triage/assessment system that is incorporated within an overall CAMHS care pathway and served by a multi-disciplinary CAMHS team and will align with the Emotional Wellbeing Services for children and young people.

(4) Medway will continue to commission its Emotional Wellbeing Services (Tier 2) and primary health through its current arrangements. Nevertheless, the vision, outcomes and objectives that Medway aim to achieve through this procurement are the same as those for Kent and as described in the Community CAMHS model.

(5) Evaluation of tenders will involve all commissioning partners, and will also include participation by young people who have had experience of mental health services.

(6) Both procurements are aligned as far as possible. Notification of award of contract will be earlier for the Emotional Wellbeing services (February). It is anticipated contract start date will be 1st April 2012. Current service providers have been advised that services from the 1st April will be procured against the multiple supplier framework.

(7) Notification to the successful bidders for Community CAMHS will be 29 March 2012 and there will be a period of mobilisation from 1 May 2012 until full service starts 3 September 2012. At the end of August 2011 the current CAMHS providers received exit letters providing them with one year's notice of termination of the current contract.

Recommendations:

4. (1) Members of the Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to **NOTE** the progress so far with regard to the re-commissioning of an Integrated Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service for Kent and a Tier 3 CAMH Service for Medway which will facilitate the commissioning of the pathway of services across the community.

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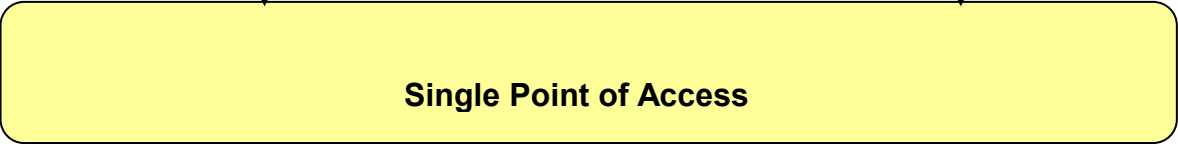
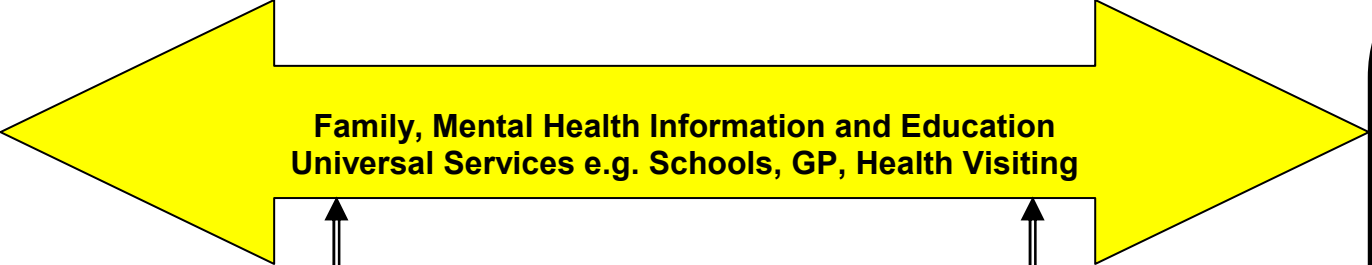
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Background Documents:

- Joint Commissioning of Integrated Community Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services – report to Cabinet 18 July 2011
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (report by NHS Kent and Medway) – Report to NHS Kent and Medway Cluster Board 20 July 2011

**INTEGRATED COMMUNITY
CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Appendix 1



APPENDIX 2

PROCUREMENT TIMELINE (Key Dates)

<i>Milestones – Emotional Wellbeing (Part of EIP Framework)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Milestones Community CAMHS</i>	<i>Date</i>
EOI published on the South East Business Portal	18 th July 2011	Advert and MOI published (via e-Sourcing portal)	1 August 2011
Closing Date for EOI	22 nd August 2011	PQQ published (via e-Sourcing portal)	3 August 2011
Invitation to Tender (ITT) issued to EOI via ProContract	22 nd /23 rd August 2011	Bidder Information Event	17 August 2011
Deadline for receipt of ITT	26 th September 2011	Deadline for receipt of Conflict of Interest	2 September 2011
Evaluation of ITT via ProContract	September / October 2011	Deadline for receipt of Declaration of Consent	
Confirm successful tenders for inclusion on the Emotional Wellbeing Category of the multiple supplier framework	1 st November 2011	Deadline for receipt of Declaration of Completion	
DMT / Cabinet Approval	November 2011	Deadline for receipt of PQQ submissions	
Notify tenderers of decision (Includes standstill period)		Completion of PQQ evaluation	16 September 2011
Mini-Competition ITT Published	December 2011	Bidders notified (via e-Sourcing portal)	19 September 2011
Deadline for receipt of mini competition	January 2012	Invitation To Tender (ITT) issued to qualifying bidders	4 November 2011
Evaluation of mini competition	January 2012	Deadline for receipt of ITT bids	14 December 2011
Providers notified	February 2012	Evaluate bids	December/January 2012
Contract Start	1 st April 2012	Confirm preferred bidder	30 January 2012
		PCT Cluster board approval	28.March 2012
		Notify bidders of decision	29 March 2012
		Standstill period & contract negotiation	April 2012
		Publish contract (start up)	01 May 2012
		(Full) Service start target date	03 September 2012

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By: Jenny Whittle-Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services
Malcolm Newsam-Interim Corporate Director-Families & Social Care

To: Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee
– 28 September 2011

Subject: **SPECIALIST CHILDRENS SERVICES BUDGET FORECAST
REPORT 2011/12**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: A report on the forecast outturn against budget for the first quarter for the Specialist Children's Services of the Families & Social Care Directorate.

Introduction

1. (1) This is the first report for 2011-12 to this Committee detailing the initial forecast outturn against budget for the Specialist Children's Services element of the Families & Social Care Directorate.

Background

2. (1) Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees consider the draft Medium Term Financial Plan at their November and January meetings. To enable a more informed discussion, three reports will be presented to the Committee on a regular basis:

a) **Budget Monitoring reports**

A detailed quarterly budget monitoring report is presented to Cabinet, usually in September, December and March, and a draft final outturn report in June. A report for each directorate is annexed to the summary report, and the annex for the Specialist Children's Services will be presented to this Committee at the meetings following those Cabinet meetings. This will help inform this POSC about current trends, pressures and management actions in advance of the next year's budget setting

b) **Performance data**

This will be reported at least half-yearly to this Committee.

c) **Outturn report**

Effectively an amalgam of the above two, the outturn report will summarise both the financial and performance information for the whole of the preceding year

(2) Informed by these reports, the POSCs will be in a stronger position to question and comment on the future budget and medium term proposals, as they will be asked to do at the November and January meetings.

Budget Informal Members Group

3. (1) An initial Budget IMG, for the Children's element of this Directorate, was held on the 29th July, this was used to set the scene of the budget for children's social services and the likely implications arising from the MTP process. As the meeting was held at the early stages of the 2012/13 budget process, it was agreed that a further meeting would be held again in September, when more information on likely required savings may be available.

Full Monitoring report for the First Quarter

4. (1) The July 2011 Full Monitoring report for Specialist Children's Services as presented to Cabinet on 21st September is attached at Appendix 1 (sequencing as per the Cabinet report) and this indicates an overall revenue over spend of £8.778m.

(2) The main areas to note within the latest position are:

- £1.150m of savings are still assumed red within the latest forecast in relation to the following:

	£'m
Children's High Cost Placements	0.750
Out of County Placements	0.400
Total	1.150

- The achievement of savings are pivotal to the delivery of an efficiently managed budget. We are confident that through our regular monitoring process all savings will be realised and achieved.
- The Directorate has reviewed all cash limits and affordable levels of activity in light of the 2010/11 out-turn and any changing trends in activity that have become apparent since the budget was set. An initial number of requests for virement and other known inter Directorate changes to cash limits are included as part of the Cabinet report in September. All approved roll forwards agreed at the 20th June Cabinet, the budget in relation to the Children's Improvement Plan, workforce strategy funding, along with any residual under spend from 10-11 has now been added to the forecast.

The summarised reasons for variances are shown below in Table 1, with further detail contained within Appendix 1.

Table 1

Budget Book Heading	New cash limit			Variance			Comments
	G	I	N	G	I	N	
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	
Specialist Children's Services portfolio							
Strategic Management & Directorate Support Budgets	4,715	-2,566	2,149	44	0	44	
<u>Services for Schools:</u>							
Early Years & Childcare Advisory Service	13,467	-13,467	0	-607	7	-600	Recommissioning of SLA with NCA
<u>Social Services for Children:</u>							
16+ Service	8,988	0	8,988	793	0	793	Increased residential weeks, cost of Independent fostering, staffing pressures
Adoption Service	7,147	-49	7,098	345	-11	334	Special Guardianship Orders & staffing pressures
Asylum Seekers	14,525	-14,245	280	1,193	-396	797	continuing support of 18+ Asylum seekers who are not eligible for grant funding
Childrens Support Services	3,414	-1,940	1,474	33	6	39	
Fostering Service	31,904	-407	31,497	4,255	3	4,258	Activity above affordable level, increased allowances as a result of new legislation, legal costs
Other Preventative Services	16,476	-8,541	7,935	-403	0	-403	Southwark Judgement pressures, offset by uncommitted funds
Residential Children's Services	10,932	-2,533	8,399	999	66	1,065	Activity above affordable level, offset by lower unit costs & underspend on secure accommodation
Safeguarding	4,142	-373	3,769	125	0	125	Staffing as a result of Ofsted inspection
	97,528	-28,088	69,440	7,340	-332	7,008	
<u>Support for Individual Children</u>							
- Children's Centres	19,741	-18,854	887	0	0	0	
- Integrated Looked After Children's Service	2,182	-704	1,478	90	0	90	
	21,923	-19,558	2,365	90	0	90	
<u>Intermediate Services</u>							
- Assessment of Vulnerable Children	39,399	-2,520	36,879	2,206	30	2,236	Staffing pressures
Total SCS portfolio	177,032	-66,199	110,833	9,073	-295	8,778	

- (3) The latest capital position at Appendix 2 currently shows a break-even position, with movements in cash limits changed when the capital programme was originally approved.

Recommendations

5. (1) Members of the Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- a) NOTE the current revenue and capital financial outturn for 2011/12
- b) NOTE the latest position with regards to the savings element of the monitoring

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Background documents: None

FAMILIES & SOCIAL CARE DIRECTORATE SUMMARY JULY 2011-12 FULL MONITORING REPORT

1. FINANCE

Specialist Children's Services portfolio:

Overall forecast net pressure of £8,778k, details of which are below.

1.1.3.1 Early Years & Childcare Service: -£600k (-£607k gross, +£7k income)

A £600k forecast under spend is reported, due to the successful re-negotiation of the National Childminding Association Contract, which reduced the original cost to £95k. This organisation carries out various strategic commissioning training sessions for Childminders on behalf of the Early Years Service. This contract is managed within the Children's Centres Central Team budget.

1.1.3.2 16+ Service- +£793k gross

An increase in spend of £428k in the Private & Voluntary sector is a major contributor to the pressure on the 16+ service. This is due to an expected variance of 143 weeks support in residential care above the affordable level (+39%), due to children remaining in their placements when turning 16, rather than moving into lower cost supported lodgings. The Authority has a legal obligation to maintain the existing placement if the child requests.

An increase of £248k in Independent Fostering Payments spend is also contributing to the forecast pressure on the 16+ service. This is due to a forecast variance of 257 weeks support above the affordable level (+36%) (£260k), which has been mitigated by a slight reduction in the unit cost of placements, down 1% (£12k).

£112k of the forecast pressure is as a result of the team now being fully staffed to meet the increased demand on these services as a result of the higher activity seen so far in 2011-12. This increase in activity has also resulted in higher than anticipated payments to Relevant Children (£67k) & Section 24/Leaving Care payments (£25k). (Relevant Children are defined under the Leaving Care act as "children aged 16-17 who are no longer looked after by a local authority, but who were looked after for at least 13 weeks after the age of 14 and have been looked after at some time while they were aged 16 and 17). We are forecasting an underspend of £88k in Non-Related (in-house) Fostering within the 16+ service. This is due to forecast activity being 60 weeks less than the affordable level (£24k), and the unit cost being £9 less than budgeted (£64k).

1.1.3.3 Adoption Service: +£334k (+£345k gross, -£11k income)

The current forecast variance of £334k includes £159k as a result of an increase of staff in the Adoption Team. An increase in costs relating to Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) of £210k is offset by a small under spend of £24k on Adoption payments. There is an upward trend for SGO's in order to secure a permanent placement for a child where adoption is not suitable or required. In order to secure permanency, SGO legal orders through the courts are required.

1.1.3.4 Asylum Seekers: +£797k (+£1,193k gross, -£396k income)

This gross pressure relates to the costs incurred in continuing to support young people over 18 years old who are not eligible under UKBA's grant rules. We are assuming that we will have an average of 110 young people who do not qualify under the grant rules mainly because they are Appeal Rights Exhausted, or are naturalised but not able to claim benefits. Under the Leaving Care Act, we continue to have a duty of care to support these young people. In addition the grant rules exclude the first 25 eligible young people.

While the number of clients supported has reduced in 2011-12 this still remains higher than originally budgeted, resulting in an expected increase in grant income. In total we are forecasting 795 weeks above the budgeted level. These are spread between both over 18s (480 weeks, £72k) and under 18s (315 weeks, £255k). In addition the age distribution of the under 18 client group is skewed further towards under 16s that originally anticipated, as a result our forecast has increased by a further £69k. All these additional costs will be reimbursed under the current grant rules, as a result our income forecast has risen by £396k.

1.1.3.5 Fostering Service: +£4,258k (+£4,255k gross, +£3k income)

Non-Related Fostering (in-house) is forecasting a pressure of £1,679k, as a result of the forecast number of weeks of service being 9.9% higher than the affordable level of 41,800, this generates £1,654k of the current pressure. Additionally, the unit cost being slightly (£0.48) higher than previously estimated when setting the cash limit has added £22k to the pressure. There is a slight (£3k) pressure arising from income.

Independent Fostering is forecasting a pressure of £516k. Again this is as a result of a significant increase in weeks support, which is 16% higher than the affordable level of 3,990 and results in a pressure of £705k. However the average weekly cost is 4% lower than budgeted, and this reduces the net pressure by £189k.

Related Foster payments is forecasting a pressure of £354k, and Kinship Non LAC is forecasting a pressure of £533k, both are mainly due to a potential increase in allowances paid to related fosters. New legislation that came into effect on the 1st April 2011 requires Local Authorities to pay reward payments to related foster carers. Currently Kent's policy is that related carers only receive the maintenance element, whereas non-related carers receive both a maintenance and a fee element. The outcome of the recent Manchester City Council judgement regarding this legislation was ambiguous, so legal advice is currently sought. As a precaution, £620k has been included in the forecast for 2011-12 for this Related Foster payments £260k and Kinship Non LAC £360k.

The balance of pressure on Related Foster payments of £94k is largely due to unanticipated pre-adoption payments.

The balance of the pressure on Kinship Non LAC, (non LAC children placed with relatives), of £173k is primarily due to increased demand for this service with the forecast number of weeks being 1,800 higher than affordable. (*Kinship Non LAC is not included in the activity shown at Section 2.2.*)

Legal costs are currently forecast at the same level as in 2010-11 (£5m), this adds £1,155k to the forecast pressure

1.1.3.6 Other Preventative Services: -£403k gross

Within preventative services there is £727k of uncommitted monies. It has been agreed at this stage not to commit these monies to new contracts with the voluntary sector due to the significant financial pressures elsewhere in the specialist children's services.

This is off-set by a forecast overspend of £415k on Section 17 payments as a result of increased payments arising from the Southwark Judgement. This challenged local authorities to consider the wider needs of vulnerable young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who present themselves as homeless and to deal with the issue in a corporate manner rather than through individual agencies. It concluded that the young persons were to be treated as children in need (as defined by Section 20 of the Children Act 1989), and that they should be taken into the care of the local authority. This will result in an increase of 16-18 year olds in the care system. Prior to the judgement these clients would have been accommodated by the district council housing departments. It is difficult to forecast with accuracy how many young people will return to our care, and what services they will require and be entitled to

1.1.3.7 Residential Children's Services: +£1,065k (+£999k gross, +£66k income)

Of the pressure within residential services, £1,103k (£877k gross, £226k income) relates to services purchased in the independent sector. This is due to the forecast number of client weeks (1,432) being 24% higher than the affordable level and results in a pressure of £896k. However, the gross unit cost is 1% below the planned level which reduces the pressure by £18k. However, due to fewer clients than anticipated attracting Health and/or Education funding, our income forecast is £226k lower than budgeted for.

Secure Accommodation is forecasting an underspend of £319k based on current activity.

Independent Sector residential care for children with a disability is also showing a pressure of £235k (£393k gross, £158k income). This is due to an increase in activity of 20% above the affordable level, which results in a pressure of £587k, but this is mitigated by a gross unit cost being 6% lower than affordable giving a saving of £194k and higher than budgeted income of £158k.

KCC Residential care shows an underspend of £12k. (Gross £10k, Income £2k)

In addition there has been 1 additional placement, for 13 weeks, made in Non-LAC residential care at an approximate cost of £3,500 per week, resulting in the majority of the £58k pressure on this service.

1.1.3.8 Safeguarding: +£125k gross

Additional safeguarding posts have been required following the Ofsted inspection, however this decision was made after the 2011-13 MTFP and budget process was complete. In recognition of this, £374k of the £2.128m uncommitted roll forward from 2010-11 that Cabinet agreed for CSS at it's meeting in July has been transferred here, which reduces the potential pressure to the £125k reported here.

1.1.3.9 Intermediate Services - Assessment of Vulnerable Children: +£2,132k (+£2,102k gross, +£30k income)

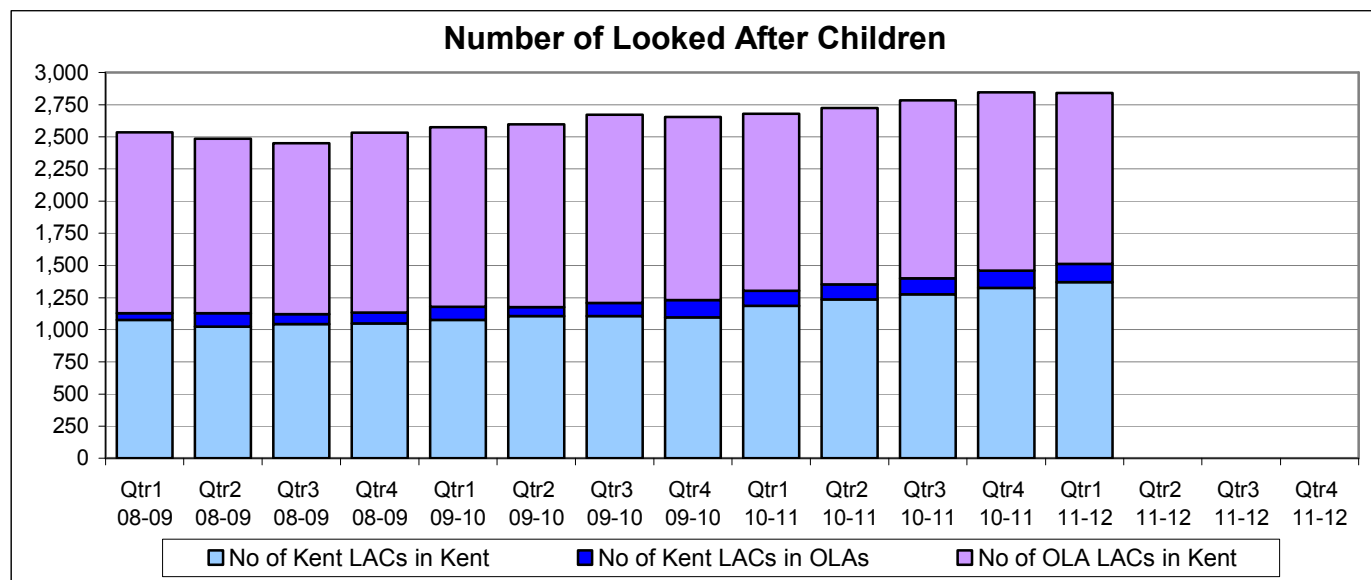
Following the Ofsted inspection, teams have recruited additional staff, mainly agency social workers. This has caused the significant pressure that is now being forecast. In recognition of this, £1,754k of the £2.128m uncommitted roll forward from 2010-11 that Cabinet agreed for CSS at it's meeting in July has been transferred here, leaving a gross staffing pressure of £2,206k

2. KEY ACTIVITY INDICATORS AND BUDGET RISK ASSESSMENT MONITORING

The affordable levels of activity for 2011-12 have been amended from those included in the 2010-11 outturn report following the review of the budget across service groups in light of the 2010-11 outturn and the allocation of previously unallocated budgets, as detailed in section 1.

2.1 **Numbers of Looked After Children (LAC):** (Excludes Asylum Seekers)

	No of Kent LAC placed in Kent	No of Kent LAC placed in OLAs	TOTAL NO OF KENT LAC	No of OLA LAC placed in Kent	TOTAL No of LAC in Kent
2008-09					
Apr – Jun	1,075	52	1,127	1,408	2,535
Jul – Sep	1,022	105	1,127	1,360	2,487
Oct – Dec	1,042	77	1,119	1,331	2,450
Jan – Mar	1,048	84	1,132	1,402	2,534
2009-10					
Apr – Jun	1,076	100	1,176	1,399	2,575
Jul – Sep	1,104	70	1,174	1,423	2,597
Oct – Dec	1,104	102	1,206	1,465	2,671
Jan – Mar	1,094	139	1,233	1,421	2,654
2010-11					
Apr – Jun	1,184	119	1,303	1,377	2,680
Jul – Sep	1,237	116	1,353	1,372	2,725
Oct – Dec	1,277	123	1,400	1,383	2,783
Jan – Mar	1,326	135	1,461	1,385	2,846
2011-12					
Apr – Jun	1,371	141	1,512	1,330	2,842
Jul – Sep					
Oct – Dec					
Jan – Mar					

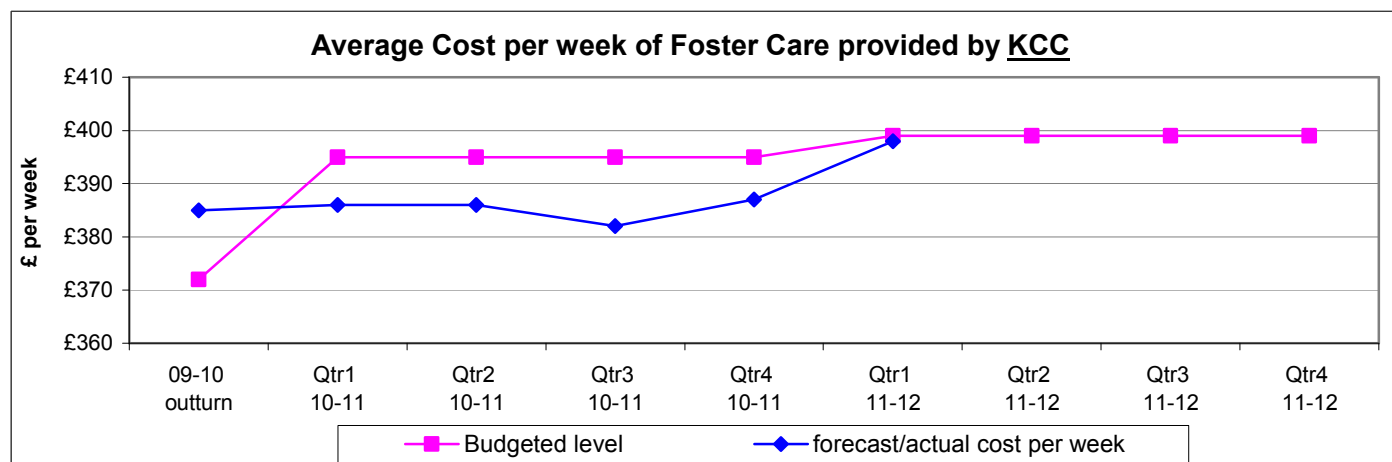
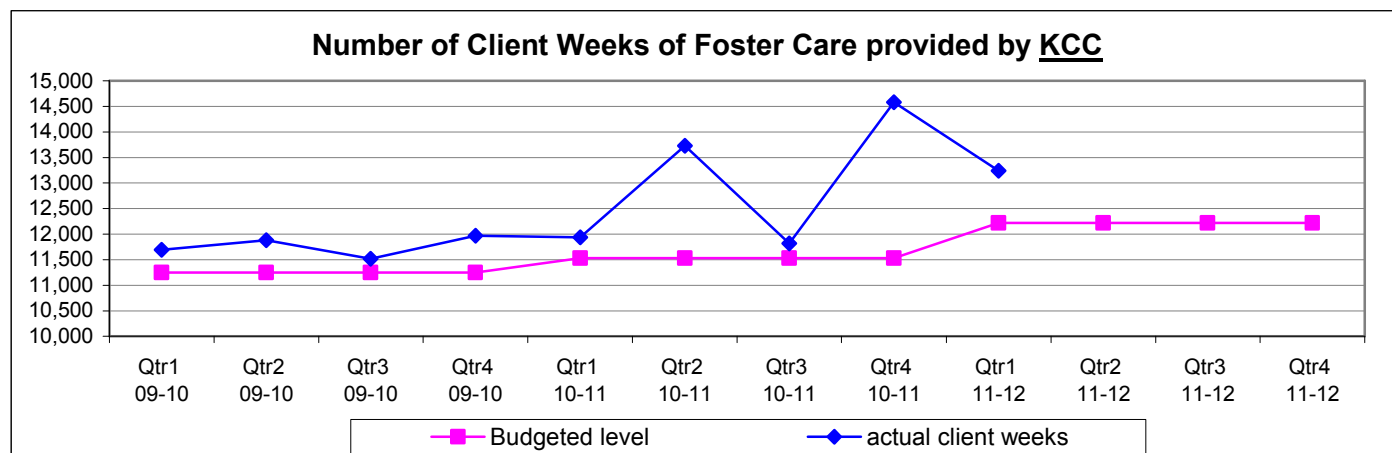


Comments:

- Children Looked After by KCC may on occasion be placed out of the County, which is undertaken using practice protocols that ensure that all long-distance placements are justified and in the interests of the child. All Looked After Children are subject to regular statutory reviews (at least twice a year), which ensures that a regular review of the child's care plan is undertaken. The majority (over 99%) of Looked After Children placed out of the Authority are either in adoptive placements, placed with a relative, specialist residential provision not available in Kent or living with KCC foster carers based in Medway.
- The number of looked after children for each quarter represents a snapshot of the number of children designated as looked after at the end of each quarter, it is not the total number of looked after children during the period. Therefore although the number of Kent looked after children appears to have increased by 51 this quarter, there are likely to have been more during the period.
- The increase in the number of looked after children has placed additional pressure on the services for Looked After Children, including Fostering services and 16+ services budgets.

2.2.1 Number of Client Weeks & Average Cost per Client Week of Foster Care provided by KCC (Non Related Fostering):

	2009-10				2010-11				2011-12			
	No of weeks		Average cost per client week		No of weeks		Average cost per client week		No of weeks		Average cost per client week	
	Budget Level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	forecast
Apr - June	11,249	11,695			11,532	11,937	£395	£386	12,219	13,239	£399	£398
July - Sep	11,249	11,880			11,532	13,732	£395	£386	12,219		£399	
Oct - Dec	11,249	11,518			11,532	11,818	£395	£382	12,219		£399	
Jan - Mar	11,249	11,969			11,532	14,580	£395	£387	12,219		£399	
	44,997	47,062	£372	£385	46,128	52,067	£395	£387	48,876	13,239	£399	

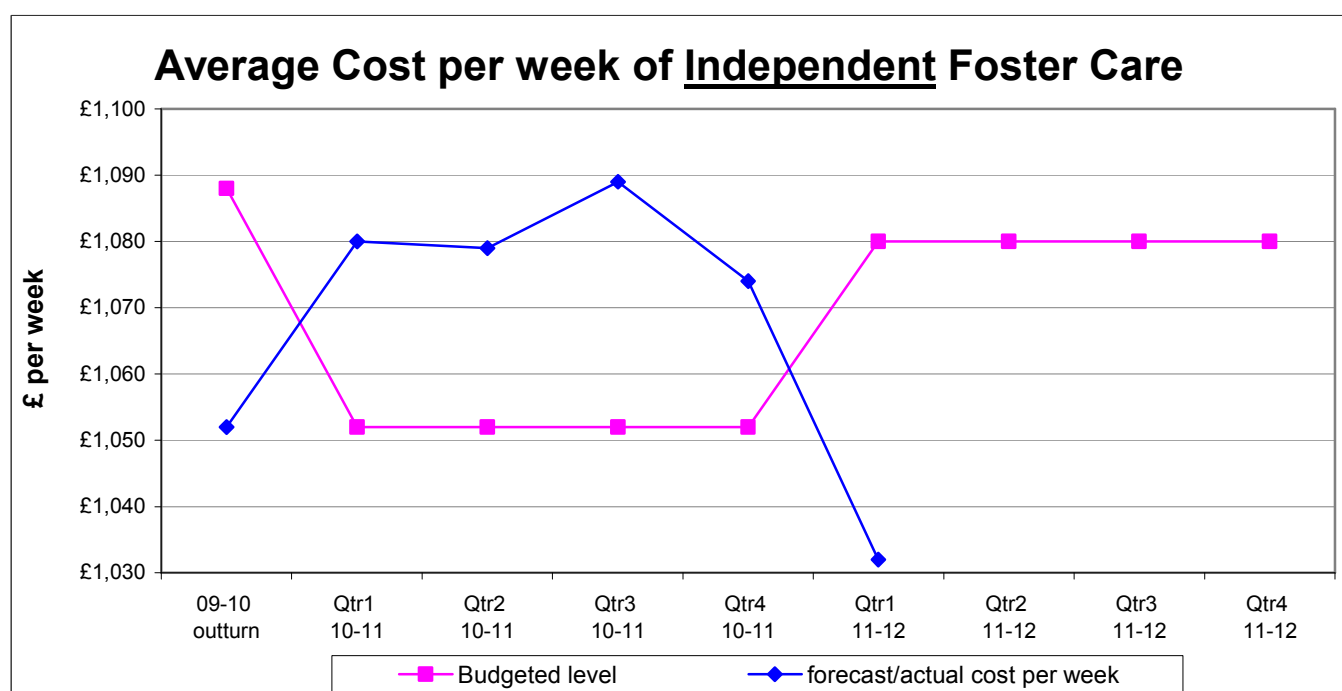
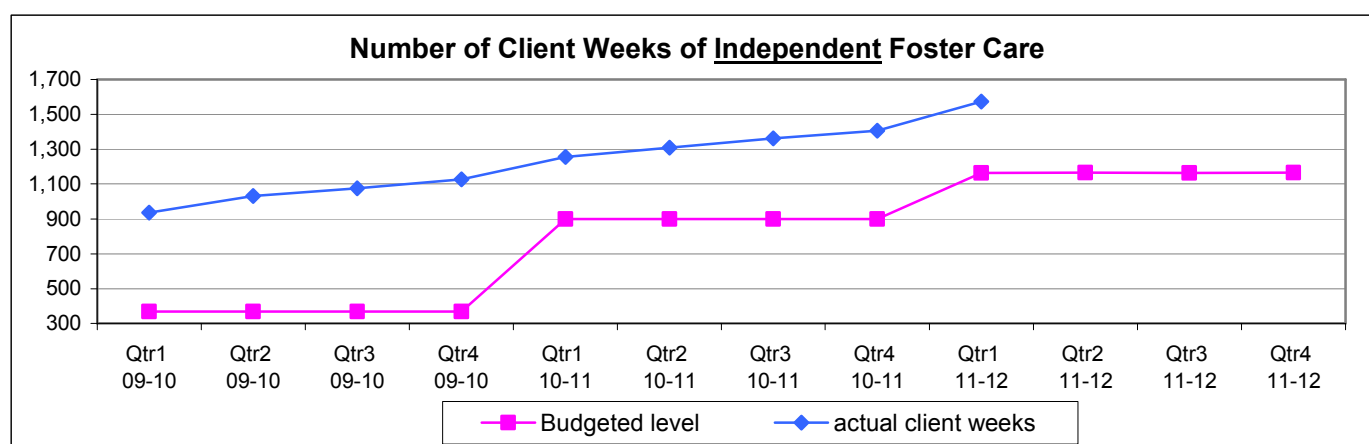


Comments:

- The actual number of client weeks is based on the numbers of known clients at a particular point in time. This may be subject to change due to the late receipt of paperwork.
- The budgeted level has been calculated by dividing the budget by the average weekly cost. The average weekly cost is also an estimate based on financial information and estimates of the number of client weeks and may be subject to change.
- In addition, the 2011-12 budgeted level represents the level of demand as at the 3rd quarter's full monitoring report, which is the time at which the 2011-12 budget was set and approved. However, since that time, the service has experienced continued demand on this service.
- The current number of forecast weeks is 52,959 (including 16+, but excludes asylum), which is 4,083 weeks above the affordable level. At £399 per week, this increase in activity gives a pressure of £1,629k.
- The forecast unit cost of £398 is £0.70 below the budgeted level, which provides a saving of £37k. The unit cost for 2011-12 is 3% higher than 2010/11 outturn, largely due to an increase in KCC fostering allowance of 3%
- Overall therefore, the combined pressure on this service for both under 16's (including those with a disability) and the 16+ service is +£1,591k ($4083 \times 399 = £1628$, less 37k = £1,591k), as reported in sections 1.1.3.2 and 1.1.3.5.

2.2.2 Number of Client Weeks & Average Cost per Client Week of Independent Foster Care:

	2009-10				2010-11				2011-12			
	No of weeks		Average cost per client week		No of weeks		Average cost per client week		No of weeks		Average cost per client week	
	Budget Level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	actual	Budget level	forecast
Apr - June	369	935			900	1,257	£1,052	£1,080	1,177	1,574	£1,080	£1,032
July - Sep	369	1,032			900	1,310	£1,052	£1,079	1,178		£1,080	
Oct - Dec	369	1,075			900	1,363	£1,052	£1,089	1,177		£1,080	
Jan - Mar	369	1,126			900	1,406	£1,052	£1,074	1,178		£1,080	
	1,476	4,168	£1,088	£1,052	3,600	5,336	£1,052	£1,074	4,710	1,574	£1,080	



Comments:

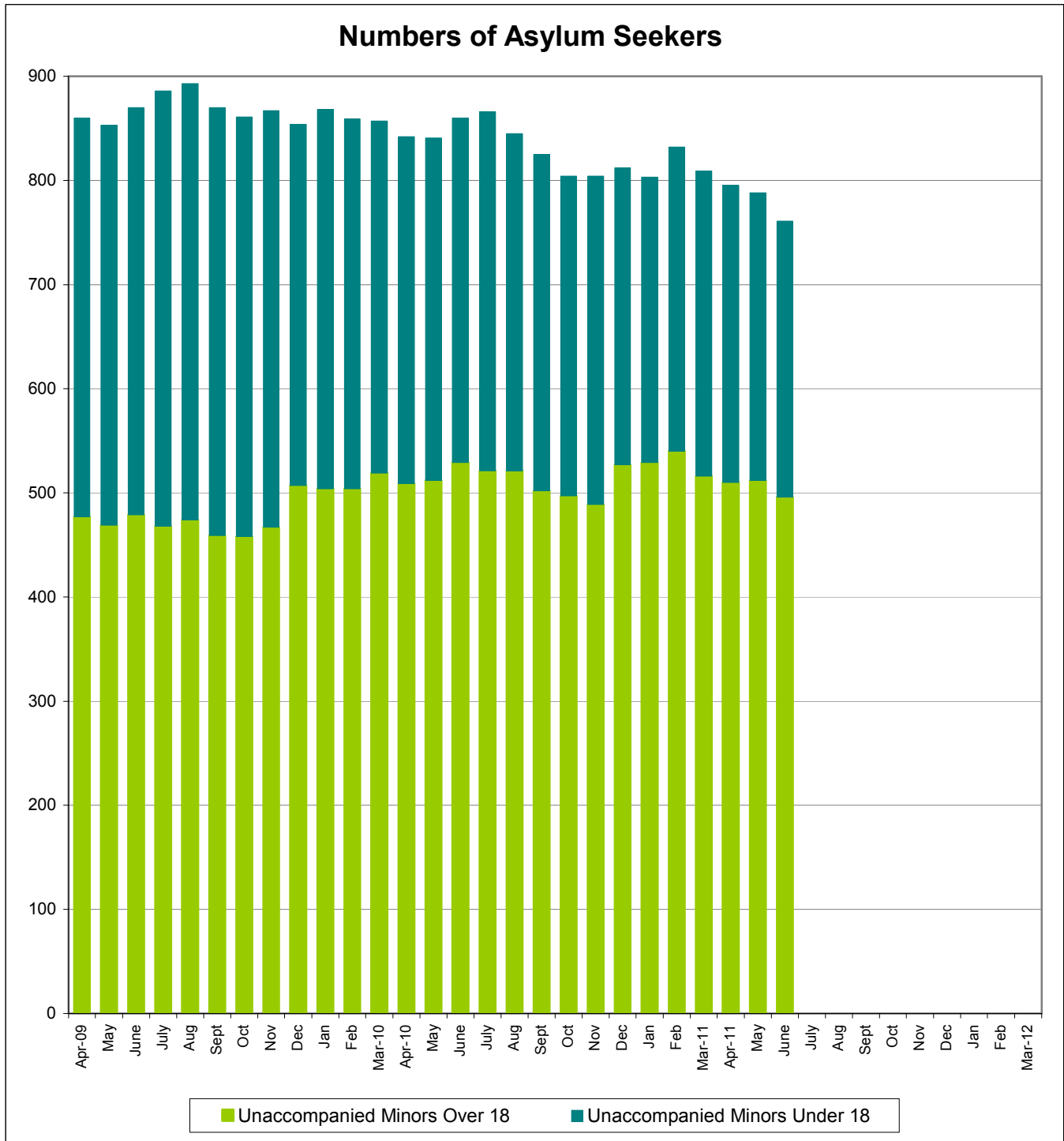
- The actual number of client weeks is based on the numbers of known clients at a particular point in time. This may be subject to change due to the late receipt of paperwork.
- The budgeted level has been calculated by dividing the budget by the average weekly cost. The average weekly cost is also an estimate based on financial information and estimates of the number of client weeks and may be subject to change.
- The budgeted levels for 2010-11 were below the 2009-10 activity because although significant funding was made available as part of the 2010-13 MTP, this was insufficient to cover the demands for this service.
- For the 2011-12 budget further significant funding has been made available based on the actual level of demand at the 3rd quarter's monitoring position for 2010-11, the time at which the 2011-12 budget

was set and approved. However, since that date the service has experienced continued demand on this service.

- The current number of forecast weeks is 5,619 (including 16+, but excludes asylum), which is 909 weeks above the affordable level. At £1,069 per week, this increase in activity gives a pressure of £972k. There are large numbers of IFA placements which are not forecast to run until 31st March 2012.
- The forecast unit cost of £1,032 is £37 below the budgeted level, which provides a saving of £208k. The cost of placements made in 2011-12 are at a significantly lower level than originally forecast, and lower than those placements that have ended in the same period, as a result, current forecast unit cost is 3.5% lower than 2010-11 outturn.
- Overall therefore, the combined pressure on this service for both under 16's (and those with a disability) and the 16+ service is +£764k, as reported in sections 1.1.3.2 and 1.1.3.5.
- It would appear that new IFA placements are being used rather than In-House due to the lack of availability of suitable in house placements

2.3 Numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC):

	2009-10			2010-11			2011-12		
	Under 18	Over 18	Total Clients	Under 18	Over 18	Total Clients	Under 18	Over 18	Total Clients
April	383	477	860	333	509	842	285	510	795
May	384	469	853	329	512	841	276	512	788
June	391	479	870	331	529	860	265	496	761
July	418	468	886	345	521	866	260	490	750
August	419	474	893	324	521	845			
September	411	459	870	323	502	825			
October	403	458	861	307	497	804			
November	400	467	867	315	489	804			
December	347	507	854	285	527	812			
January	364	504	868	274	529	803			
February	355	504	859	292	540	832			
March	338	519	857	293	516	809			

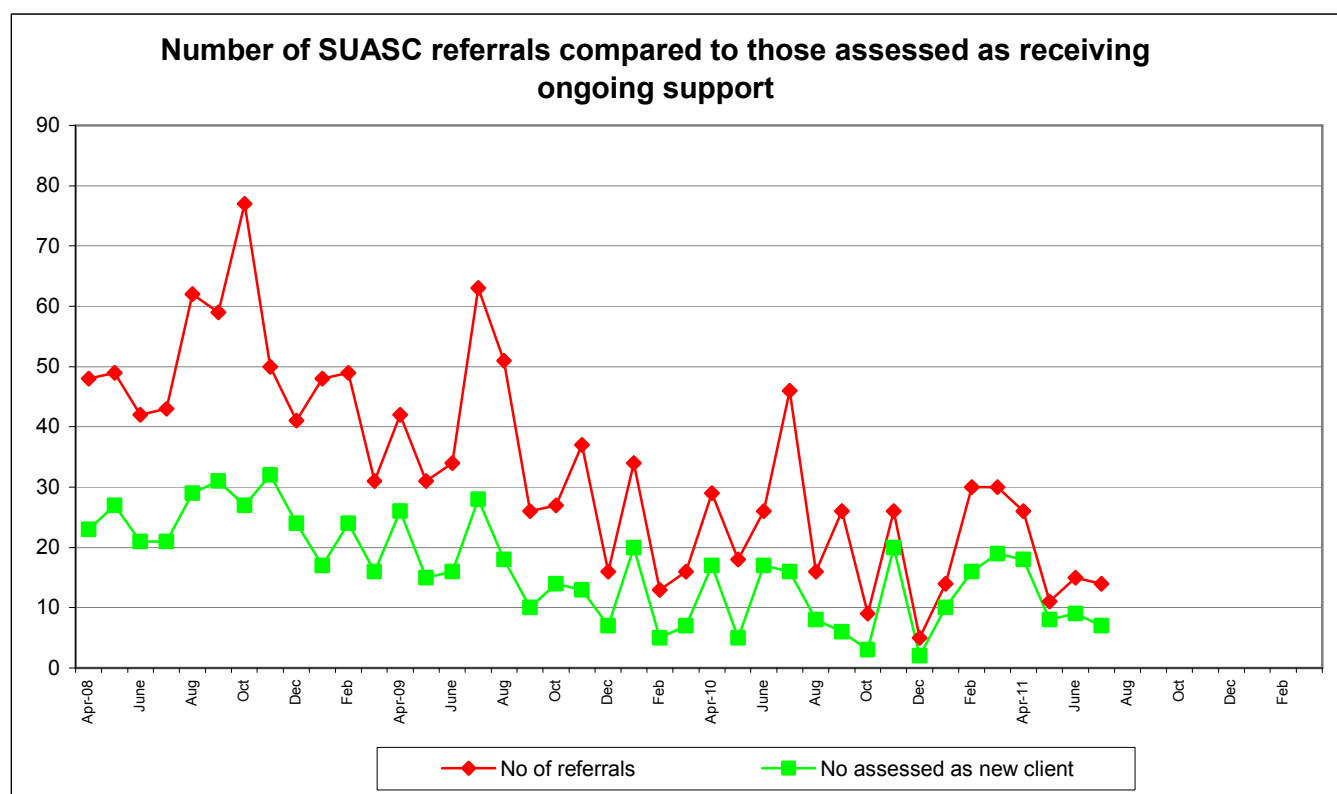


Comment:

- Client numbers have reduced as a result of lower referrals which are lower than the budgeted number. It is unclear at this time whether this trend will continue.
- The fall in the number of over 18's since March 2011 is largely the result of improved partnership working with the UKBA, which has seen a significant rise in the rate of All Rights of appeal Exhausted (ARE) removals.
- In general, the age profile suggests the number of over 18s is increasing and it is this service which is experiencing the shortfall of funding. In addition the age profile of the under 18 children has reduced, with significantly higher numbers being placed in foster care.
- The data recorded above will include some referrals for which the assessments are not yet complete or are being challenged. These clients are initially recorded as having the Date of Birth that they claim but once their assessment has been completed, or when successfully appealed, their category may change.

2.4 Numbers of Asylum Seeker referrals compared with the number assessed as qualifying for on-going support from Service for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (SUASC) ie new clients:

	2008-09			2009-10			2010-11			2011-12		
	No. of referrals	No. assessed as new client	%	No. of referrals	No. assessed as new client	%	No. of referrals	No. assessed as new client	%	No. of referrals	No. assessed as new client	%
April	48	23	48%	42	26	62%	29	17	59%	26	18	69%
May	49	27	55%	31	15	48%	18	5	28%	11	8	73%
June	42	21	50%	34	16	47%	26	17	65%	15	9	60%
July	43	21	49%	63	28	44%	46	16	35%	14	7	50%
August	62	29	47%	51	18	35%	16	8	50%			
Sept	59	31	53%	26	10	38%	26	6	23%			
Oct	77	27	35%	27	14	52%	9	3	33%			
Nov	50	32	64%	37	13	35%	26	20	77%			
Dec	41	24	59%	16	7	44%	5	2	40%			
Jan	48	17	35%	34	20	59%	14	10	71%			
Feb	49	24	49%	13	5	38%	30	16	53%			
March	31	16	52%	16	7	44%	30	19	63%			
	599	292	49%	390	179	46%	275	139	51%	66	42	64%

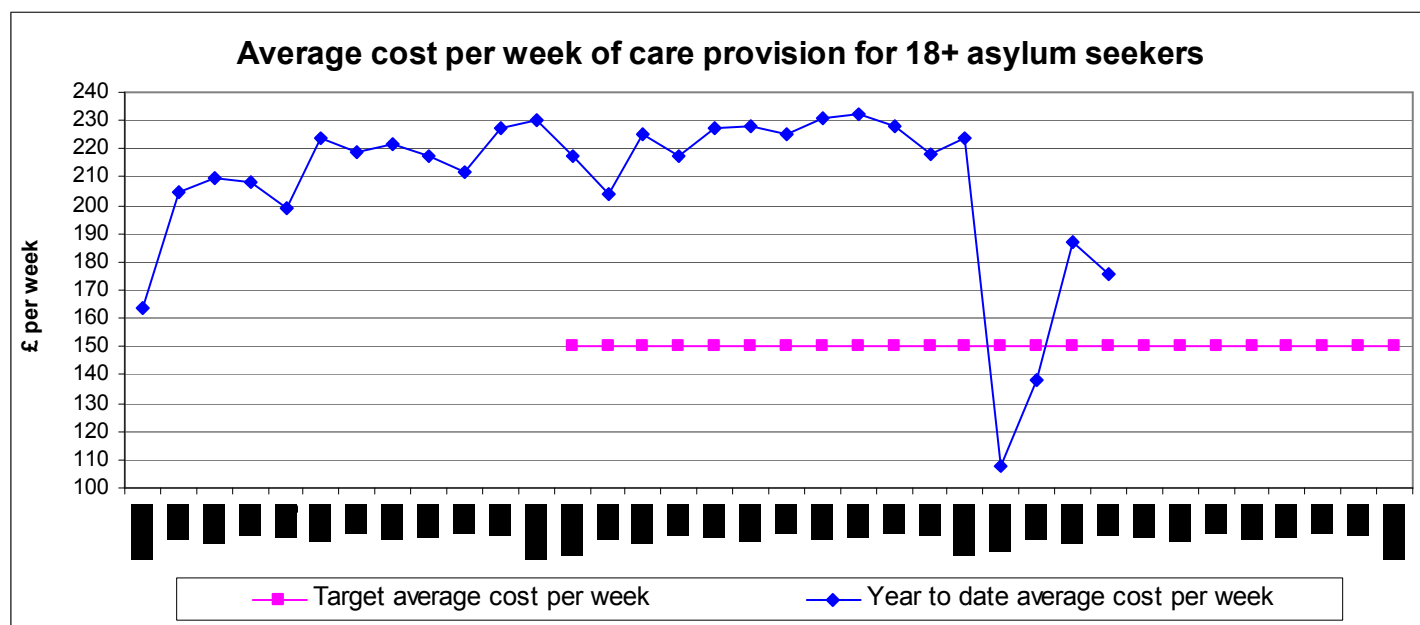


Comments:

- In general, referral rates have been lower since September 2009 which coincides with the French Government's action to clear asylum seeker camps around Calais. The average number of referrals per month is now 17.3, which is just over 50% of the budgeted number of 30 referrals per month.
- The number of referrals has a knock on effect on the number assessed as new clients. The budgeted level is based on the assumption 50% of the referrals will be assessed as a new client. In 2011-12 the rate has been 64% The average number assessed as new clients is now 7 which is 50% lower than the original forecast of 15 new clients per month.

2.5 Average monthly cost of Asylum Seekers Care Provision for 18+ Care Leavers:

	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
	Target average weekly cost £p	Year to date average weekly cost £p	Target average weekly cost £p	Year to date average weekly cost £p	Target average weekly cost £p	Year to date average weekly cost £p
April		163.50	150.00	217.14	150.00	108.10
May		204.63	150.00	203.90	150.00	138.42
June		209.50	150.00	224.86	150.00	187.17
July		208.17	150.00	217.22	150.00	175.33
August		198.69	150.00	227.24	150.00	
September		224.06	150.00	227.79	150.00	
October		218.53	150.00	224.83	150.00	
November		221.64	150.00	230.47	150.00	
December		217.10	150.00	232.17	150.00	
January		211.99	150.00	227.96	150.00	
February		226.96	150.00	218.30	150.00	
March		230.11	150.00	223.87	150.00	



Comments:

- The funding levels for the Asylum Service agreed with the Government rely on us achieving an average cost per week of £150, in order for the service to be fully funded, which is also reliant on the UKBA accelerating the removal process. In 2011-12 UKBA have changed their grant rules and will now only fund the costs of an individual for up to three months after the All Rights of appeal Exhausted (ARE) process if the LA carries out a Human Rights Assessment before continuing support. We are currently seeking legal advice regarding this change. The LA remains responsible for costs under the Leaving Care Act until the point of removal.
- As part of our partnership working with UKBA, all ARE UASC in Kent are now required to report to UKBA offices on a regular basis, in most cases weekly. The aim is to ensure that UKBA have regular contact and can work with the young people to encourage them to make use of the voluntary methods of return rather than forced removal or deportation. As part of this arrangement any young person who does not report as required may have their support discontinued. As yet this has not resulted in an increase in the number of AREs being removed. The number of AREs supported continues to increase. As a result our ability to achieve a balanced position on the Asylum Service becomes more difficult.

- Moving clients on to the pilot housing scheme was slower than originally anticipated, however all our young people, who it was appropriate to move to lower cost accommodation, were moved by the end of 2010-11. However there remain a number of issues:
 - For various reasons, some young people have not yet moved to lower cost properties, mainly those placed out of county. These placements are largely due to either medical/mental health needs or educational needs. Many of these placements, particularly those linked to education, will end in the 2nd quarter.
 - We are currently experiencing higher than anticipated level of voids, properties not being fully occupied. Following the incident in Folkestone in January, teams are exercising a greater caution when making new placements into existing properties. This is currently being addressed by the Accommodation Team.
 - We are still receiving damages claims relating to closed properties.

The average weekly cost for the first quarter of 2011-12 financial year was £187, significantly higher than the target of £150. This calculation is based upon the actual spend going through the Oracle financial management system on a monthly basis. In addition to the issues outlined above, there were a number of timing issues relating to receipt and payment of rent invoices and support payments which have resulted in the erratic movements in the monthly unit costs in the first quarter. It is envisaged that these will be corrected in the 2nd quarter and the weekly unit cost will both be less volatile and reduce closer to the target.

Appendix 2

1.2 CAPITAL

1.2.1 All changes to cash limits are in accordance with the virement rules contained within the constitution and have received the appropriate approval via the Leader, or relevant delegated authority.

The capital cash limits have been adjusted since last reported to Cabinet on 18th July 2011.

1.2.2 **Table 3** below provides a portfolio overview of the latest capital monitoring position excluding PFI projects.

	Prev Yrs Exp £000s	2011-12 £000s	2012-13 £000s	2013-14 £000s	Future Yrs £000s	TOTAL £000s
Specialist Children's Services Portfolio						
Budget	63,724	12,939	2	0	0	76,665
Adjustments:						
- Re-phasing at Outturn	-197	197				0
- Outturn Changes	-19					-19
- Thanet MASH		61	3			64
- Early Years/Children's Centres		-484				-484
- Asset Modernisation		-84				-84
						0
Revised Budget	63,508	12,629	5	0	0	76,142
Variance		0	0	0	0	0
split:						
- real variance						0
- re-phasing						0

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By: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Customer & Communities
Amanda Honey Corporate Director of Customer and Communities

To: Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 28 September 2011

Subject: **Connecting with Communities – 2010/11 Annual Report on Consultation, Engagement and Involvement Activity.**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to update Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members on the activities that took place between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011 to consult, engage and involve all those who are interested in or involved with our services.

FOR INFORMATION AND COMMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. (1) The purpose of this report is to provide information on the main aspects of consultation, engagement and involvement within KCC during the financial year 2010/2011. It also informs Members on both existing and future work and highlights the changes the Council intends to make to further embed and extend engagement processes.

(2) Whenever KCC makes a decision about improving or changing its services, it needs to be confident the decision is properly informed by public opinion. The reduction in budget allocation for public services means that it is likely that all residents will be impacted upon in some shape or form. At this time, more so than any in the recent past, it is important that the public has the opportunity to have a say about the services they receive. Public opinion should be viewed as an important tool for Councillors - the local decision makers - in making difficult decisions about where and how to reduce or redesign services.

KNOWN INFORMATION

2. (1) It is important that we target our information and use our resources in the most cost efficient way. KCC has used customer insight to ensure that we provide information in a way that suits people best.

(2) This area of work is driven by the information and data we hold about residents of Kent, including the feedback we get from customer comments and complaints. KCC also makes use of a number of data and information sources including 'MOSAIC' to provide insight into the background and lifestyles of residents across the whole of Kent.

(3) Getting an insight into how customers are interacting with KCC, what they want and who they are is crucial to improving access to services. This insight can help KCC to predict what people will want and need in future. We can also find out who is or isn't interacting with the Council as well as over/under provision and over/under utilisation.

(4) The Research and Intelligence Unit has corporate responsibility for all of the research and data areas outlined below:

- Demography
- Deprivation
- Economy and the labour market
- Land use:
 - Commercial
 - Housing
- Retail and town centres
- Customer Insight (MOSAIC).

(5) The Unit collects, collates, processes, analyses and maps data for a wide range of projects across the whole of Kent County Council and beyond. All of the latest data and publications on these topics can be found on the Research and Intelligence website www.kent.gov.uk/research

(6) This information is used before we go out to consult with the public. The knowledge gained through consultation is then fed back across KCC.

THE WAYS IN WHICH WE'VE INVOLVED LOCAL PEOPLE IN 2010/11

3. (1) There are a number of different opportunities for residents, service users and other interested groups to influence decision-making and service delivery across all our functions. The main objectives for these consultation and involvement activities are:

- To find out what customers think about the services they have received or want to receive
- To find out what particular groups or audiences think about a given theme

- To find out what interested or affected people think about a particular proposal, policy or plan
- To include groups of interested or affected people in a decision-making or policy-making process
- To involve residents in the recommendations of member community grants.
- To include groups of interested or affected people in service design and delivery, in order to improve those services
- To include groups of interested or affected people in the assessment or evaluation of services

(2) There are also a variety of methods and tools that are used to meet these objectives, as shown below:-

Satisfaction Surveys: As well as measuring satisfaction levels and monitoring them over time, surveys often include other questions which enable the services to act on the information provided to fix problems or take opportunities. The surveys are usually carried out using questionnaires (paper, email or online) or are done over the phone. They target service users and tend to be carried out by units with high levels of frontline customer contact.

Forums, groups and panels: The purpose of this sort of activity is to examine issues in greater depth and begin to explore solutions to problems or to identify new opportunities. They are 'qualitative' methods and the forums, groups and panels we run are generally groups which meet regularly to talk about a particular service. They typically involve around 5 to 15 people per group, and may be organised around a particular service, location or issue.

Participative events and processes: The main purpose of this sort of activity is to exchange views, opinions and ideas, and often making decisions together.

Market research: Main purpose of this sort of activity tends to be to generate actionable information about people, communities and groups who are, or who could be, using a service which we provide. We use it to identify opportunities for developing certain areas of our businesses.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

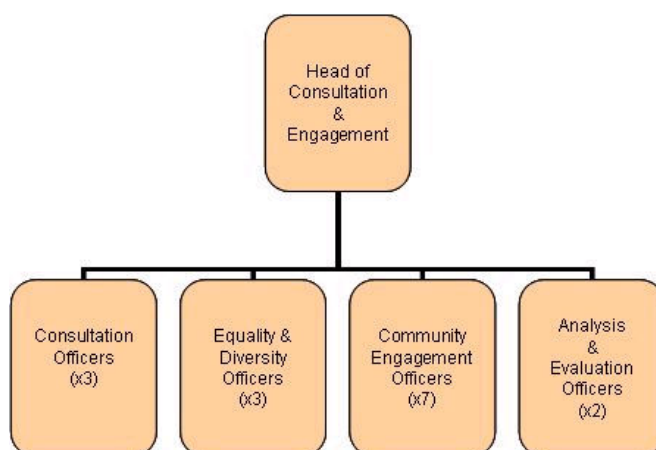
4. (1) Detail of the consultation, engagement and involvement work carried out during 2010/2011 by Children's Specialist Services is presented in the Appendix 1

OUR PLANS FOR A NEW WAY OF WORKING

5. (1) The current team of Community Engagement Managers transferred into the Communities directorate in April this year, and as part of KCC's need to make substantial savings over the next three years, the

division in which they are part of (Communications and Engagement) has been undergoing a restructure.

(2) As Officers are appointed to new roles within the restructure, the Consultation and Engagement team will be working in a different way, and will be structured as follows:



(3) Although we no longer have twelve Community Engagement Managers, the new team will have fifteen officers with different specialist areas all working much more seamlessly to support Consultation and Engagement.

(4) Though good progress has been made there is still scope for further improvement and consistency in consultation and engagement practice across the Council. From September 2011 there will be a central resource to ensure:

- KCC does not target the same audience segment by age/interest/geography at the same time with two different consultations
- All questions asked are constructed in an appropriate and unambiguous method to ensure answers that are relevant to the topic and to an agreed accuracy
- A log of all consultations is kept so that there is visibility of the contact being made by KCC with its customers – and its impact.

(5) The corporate responsibilities are for setting and supporting coherent standards, giving advice, challenging the business need and creating the opportunity for working with partners to share costs and findings.

(6) We still need to make it even easier for local people to have their say and we also need to use their views and suggestions more effectively and - crucially - ensure we publicise what difference those views made when a final decision was taken. We will continue to explore how digital technologies could be better deployed to make engagement work, cheaper, quicker, more responsive, more relevant and more convenient for residents and businesses.

CONCLUSIONS

6. (1) The examples in Appendix 1 indicate the extent to which Specialist Children's Services is using information from service users and other interested groups to influence its decision making. This is in keeping with the statutory **duty to involve** (even though the Coalition Government has indicated this is due to be repealed, the same duty will remain but become non-statutory), the Equality Act 2010 and with the culture being fostered across the Authority.

(2) Twin pressures are influencing our consultation, engagement and involvement work. Firstly there is pressure to improve the quality of the work we do, which arises from problems that other authorities have had when they have been judged to have acted incorrectly or inappropriately. This pressure concerns what we consult about, when we consult and how much detail we use to inform the consultation process and the ultimate decision making.

(3) The second pressure arises from our budget position and the need to reduce significantly the overall amount of our resource committed to consultation, engagement and involvement.

(4) Because some consultation work, for instance, must be done and must be done to a particular standard and timescale, the outlook for the future can be summarised as **doing less work overall but doing the work we do better and more efficiently and effectively.**

(5) This work will continue during 2011-12 and three particular priorities will be:-

- Undertaking a rigorous and mandatory assessment of all consultation, engagement and involvement proposals at a very early stage, in order to identify those projects that are not a priority and will not be pursued and also those that are a priority and don't just need to be done but need to be done in a demonstrably exemplary manner.
- Exploring how digital technologies could be better deployed to make engagement work cheaper, quicker, more responsive, more relevant and more convenient for residents and businesses.
- Using every opportunity to keep down the costs of consultation exercises; minimise duplication and to make best use of the analysis and information that is collected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Members of the Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to **NOTE** the contents of this report and **COMMENT** on the priorities identified in section 6 above.

Director: Jill Rawlins
Title: Interim Director of Communications and Engagement

Contact Officer: Nick Warren
Title: Consumer Monitoring Manager
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APPENDIX 1 SPECIALIST CHILDRENS SERVICES

1. Strategic Context

The U.N Convention on the Rights of the Child – Article 12 states “Children and young people have a right to have a say on all issues that affect them and for these views to be taken seriously.”

The Local Government and Public Health Act 2007, which came into force on 1 April 2009, and the “Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities” Statutory Guidance places a duty on Local Authorities to involve local people in planning and decision making.

Ofsted inspection frameworks, both at an establishment (e.g. school or Children’s Centre) level and at Authority level, include a focus on consultation and participation of children, young people and their families at all levels. This includes the requirement to ensure that the voice of those from more vulnerable groups is actively sought, heard and acted upon.

National policy has required that the views of children and young people are heard and acted upon. In this context participation is about not simply taking part or being present but rather having some influence over the decisions and actions affecting them. Participation can be seen at a personal level with children and young people able to influence decisions that affect them as individuals. It can also be considered in the broader context with children and young people as a group.

2. Local Context

Specialist Children’s Services has a range of opportunities for children, young people and their families to inform and actively participate in the planning and review of a wide range of services and to influence planning in their local communities.

The views and experiences of children and young people are embedded in our performance frameworks and we actively use what they tell us as part of performance management, at a strategic, service and locality level.

All Kent Schools have school councils and many are developing opportunities for parents to become more actively involved in the education and wellbeing of their children and the management and strategic focus of the school.

We have commissioned Kent Children’s Fund Network to train practitioners in meaningful participation practice. In 2010/11 they will be developing shadow boards of children and young people to work alongside and inform each of the 12 Local Children’s Trust Boards. As part of the recent review of Commissioned Services, we have ended our contract with Kent Children’s Fund Network to deliver the Participate by Right! project. We are in the process of managing the decommissioning process. Our contract finishes on

30th September and we are celebrating the success of the project with a special morning event to be held on 21st September 2011

3. Activity this year

We have adopted a range of opportunities for children, young people and their families to inform and actively participate in the planning and review of services, including universal, targeted and specialist safeguarding services.

3.1 Some of the key activities which demonstrate the way in which young people are involved in decisions and planning at a strategic level are:

Parent Participation Strategy – Disabled Children

Lead Officer: Rose Dillon

Telephone: 01233 652107

e-mail: rose.dillon@kent.gov.uk

The Parent Participation Strategy has been written under the Short Breaks Pathfinder Programme and relates to the participation of parents in service planning and decision making processes for all aspects of the ***Aiming High*** core offer. Feedback has influenced wording and the PP Strategy has been re-issued, but will need to be updated from spring 2011 when the Kent Parent Participation Network (KPPN) becomes fully operational.

Culturally Competent Care

Lead Officer: Sue Clifton, Operations Manager Catch 22 16plus

Telephone: 07775998178

e-mail: sue.clifton@kent.gov.uk

This is an opportunity for young people to feed back to practitioners and take part in training workers around cultural diversity, using a service user representative group from the Catch 22 service.

Young People's Advisory Group

Lead Officer: Sue Clifton, Operations Manager Catch 22 16plus

Telephone: 07775998178

e-mail: sue.clifton@kent.gov.uk

A group of looked after children, young people and care leavers meet monthly to discuss issues which they face and to make recommendations. Topics have included accommodation, education and finance. The meetings are minuted and information is shared with the Children in Care Council (CICC).

Kent Primary School Children's Council (KPSCC)

Lead Officer: Emma Jenkins, Study Support Co-ordinator, ELS

Telephone: 01622 626780

e-mail: emma.jenkins@kent.gov.uk

The KPSCC is attended by 69 Year 5 and 6 pupils twice a year and is chaired by the Kent Youth County Council. It is linked back to the School Council in each District and debates topics chosen by the children. Topics have included children's rights and environmental issues. Information provide improves study support and out of hours opportunities for children via Extended Services. The next meeting welcomes a new cohort of children and the children will be discussing the theme of 'Happiness' and their aspirations for their future. Date of the next meeting is 7th October 2010.

Kent Children's Trust Board panels of children, young people and parents:

Panels of young people and parents have been established to act as reference groups for the work of the Kent Children's Trust Board and its Executive group. The panels give a view on key issues being considered by the Trust and act as a sounding board for the Trust. In addition the panels will also have an opportunity to raise their concerns and issues with the Children's Trust.

The Panels have been consulted on specific issues such as experiences of childhood in Kent, safety and access to services which has fed into the development of priorities of new Children's and Young People's Plan and the improvement of services through Kent Children's Trust Activity.

In March 2010 Kent Children's Trust took the decision to decommission the company, BMG, that was delivering the reference panels on KCC's behalf. It was felt that there were more cost-efficient ways to gather views on key issues. This work has been taken forward by the work of **Participate by Right!** who have worked in three pilot areas to develop mechanisms for children and young people to have their say on local issues.

Disabled Children's Council

Lead Officer: Victoria Clarke, Participation Officer, ELS SEN&R

Telephone: 01622 350640 214

e-mail: Victoria.Clarke@kent.gov.uk

A disabled children's council has been established in order to ensure that young people with disabilities are not marginalised and are able to participate in the decisions that affect the services they need and to influence the broader policy. This will also equip them with key skills to fully participate in civic society as they grow into adulthood. The first meeting of Disabled Children's Council took place 15th June 2010 at Rare Breeds Centre, Ashford. Children were able to have their say on the development of the Early Intervention & Prevention Strategy, be part of the consultation on the Special Education Needs Green Paper, vote electronically on the future of the Disabled Children's Council, produce a newspaper of the day and have fun. The meeting was a success with children voting to meet again in smaller groups at three venues across Kent to discuss issues important to them.

The Participation Working Group has continued to support the Kent Children's Trust with skills and expertise of a range of multi-agency partners on participation and engagement of children and young people. Partners include representatives from Kent Youth Service, CAMHS, Connexions, Voluntary & Community Sector, Kent Parent Partnership Service and Extended Services. The dedicated support from KCC to administer this group has been withdrawn as part of decommissioning of the ***Participate by Right!*** contract.

Young Inspectors project

Lead Officer: Victoria Clarke, Participation Officer, ELS SEN&R jointly with Claire Traynor of Kent Youth service

Telephone: 01622 350640 214

e-mail: Victoria.Clarke@kent.gov.uk

This is a joint project whose aim is to recruit and train disabled young people to inspect services. The young people chose the services they think should be inspected and get involved in drawing up the inspection checklist, visiting the service and writing up the report after their visit.

3.2 Additional survey activity:

Name: Childcare Sufficiency Assessment parents survey

Lead Officer: Tony Alderton, Researcher for Early Years & Childcare

Telephone: 01622 626614

e-mail: tony.alderton@kent.gov.uk

Research on parental demand for childcare was partly undertaken by means of a large scale survey and this involved 1250 households responding (out of 6,253 calls) to a telephone survey in October 2010.

Name: Childcare Sufficiency Assessment annual providers' survey

Lead Officer: Tony Alderton, Researcher for Early years & Childcare

Telephone: 01622 626614

e-mail: tony.alderton@kent.gov.uk

Research on the supply side for the Childcare Assessment 2011 was undertaken in the form of a survey of childcare providers in September 2010.

Name: Children & Young People's secondary transfer survey

Lead Officer: Victoria Clarke, Participation Officer, ELS SEN&R

Telephone: 01622 350640 214

e-mail: Victoria.Clarke@kent.gov.uk

13 children from 4 randomly selected mainstream schools were interviewed in 2010 about their experience of secondary transfer.

Name: Children & Young People's statutory assessment survey

Lead Officer: Victoria Clarke, Participation Officer, ELS SEN&R

Telephone: 01622 350640 214

e-mail: Victoria.Clarke@kent.gov.uk

15 children and young people were interviewed in 2010 about their experience of the statutory assessment process and also their feedback on an information booklet that had been produced as a result of research the previous year.

Name: Parents' and Carers' statutory assessment survey

Lead Officer: Victoria Clarke, Participation Officer, ELS SEN&R

Telephone: 01622 350640 214

e-mail: Victoria.Clarke@kent.gov.uk

69 parents completed the survey between July 2009 and July 2010 giving their views and experiences of the statutory assessment process. In addition 33 parents completed a survey on their views and experiences of the referral process for statutory assessment.

Name: Kent Educational Psychology Service parental satisfaction survey August 2010

Lead Officer: Andrew Heather, Principal Educational Psychologist, ELS

Telephone: 01622 695725

e-mail: Andrew.heather@kent.gov.uk

Service Enquiry Forms were sent to a random selection of 145 parents who had previous involvement with an educational Psychologist, asking for their views and experiences. Some 90% of respondents agreed that the psychologist's involvement had been positive. Information received from respondents is generally used to review and modify practice.

A letter was sent to all recipients of the Service Enquiry Forms with the results of the evaluation and the findings from the survey are contained in the EP service Operation Plan which is available on the website.

Name: Family Group Conferencing feedback questionnaires

Lead Officer: Dawn Walsh, County Manager, Family Group

Telephone: 07717852865

e-mail: dawn.walsh @kent.gov.uk

Three families per team were randomly selected as soon as possible after the Family Group Conference to carry out a telephone interview of the key family members' experiences and the success of their FGC – resulting in an average score of 7 on a scale of 1 to 10.

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By: Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services
 Malcolm Newsam, Interim Corporate Director, Families and Social Care

To: Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 28 September 2011

Subject: **COMPLAINTS 2010/11**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides information about the operation of the Children's Social Services Complaints and Representations Procedure in 2010/11

1. Introduction

1. (1) Specialist Children's Services work with the most vulnerable children and families in Kent. Much of the work is focussed on intervening in family life and is governed by complex legislation, guidance and policy. Included in the legislation is a requirement to operate a robust complaints procedure for children and those closely involved with them. This provides children and other service users with the right to be heard, the opportunity to resolve issues and to take matters further if they are not resolved, an additional safeguard for vulnerable people, and information which contributes towards quality assurance and service development.

(2) The statutory requirement to produce an annual complaints report in respect of Children's Social Services is laid down by the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The associated guidance states that this should be presented to staff and to Members and be made available to the regulator and the general public.

(3) All Looked After Children in Kent are advised how to complain. Information is also provided in leaflets, cards, on the website and via partner organisations, so that all children in receipt of services, and the adults in their lives, are encouraged to exercise their right to complain.

2. Operation of the Children's Social Services Complaints Procedure in 2010/11

2. (1) Complaints about Specialist Children's Services are managed by the Customer Care Team which is currently managed within FSC. In 2010/11 the team was managed within Commissioning and Partnerships in the former CFE Directorate.

(2) There are three stages to the statutory complaints procedure:

- Stage One - Local Resolution,
- Stage Two – Investigation,
- Stage Three - Complaints Review Panel.

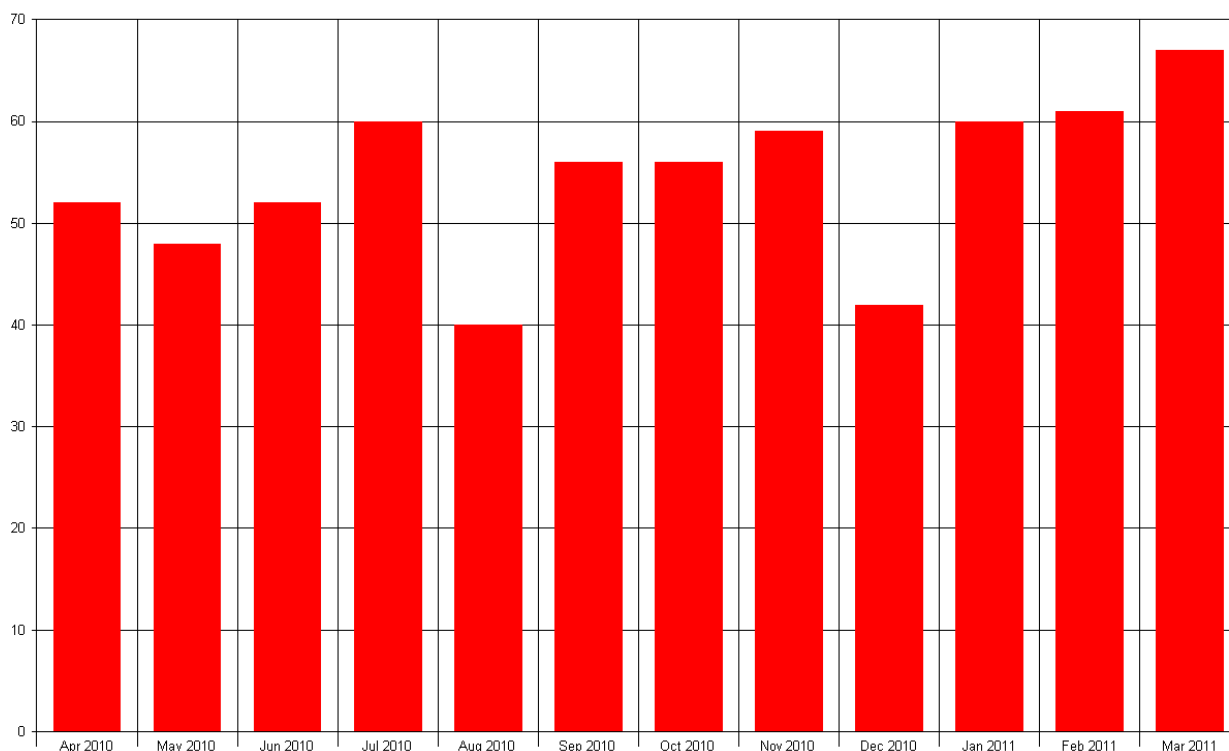
(3) Where a complaint is not resolved at Stage One, or Stage One is unreasonably lengthy, the complainant has the right for the complaint to be considered at Stage Two (Investigation Stage). This involves a thorough investigation into the issues and consideration of the complaint by an off-line Investigating Officer and an Independent Person. Complainants have the right for their complaints to progress to a Complaints Review Panel if they remain dissatisfied and the main issues are not upheld at Stage Two.

3. Representations made to the local authority

3. (1) 2010/11 saw a large increase in complaints about Specialist Children's Services. Numbers continue to rise in 2011/12.

Type of Record	2006/07	2007/08	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Enquiry	69	94	98	126	166
Compliment	36	36	71	66	54
Corporate complaints	50	89	73	98	139
Statutory complaints	189	178	193	200	267
Complaints total	239	267	266	298	406

Specialist Children's Services total records by month



all statutory, non-statutory complaints and enquiries received in period

Contact method

Type of Record	Card/Gift	E-mail	Fax	Letter	Other	Telephone	Visit	Website	Total
Children Act	0	65	0	127	0	72	1	2	267
Corporate Complaint	0	40	1	70	0	27	0	1	139
Enquiry	0	30	0	134	0	0	0	2	166
Merit/Compliment	11	18	0	20	5	0	0	0	54

(2) Although there was an increase in emailed complaints, most complainants prefer to write a letter. As in previous years, it remains highly unusual for complainants to use the website to make a complaint.

Representations via elected representatives

(3)

Enquiries

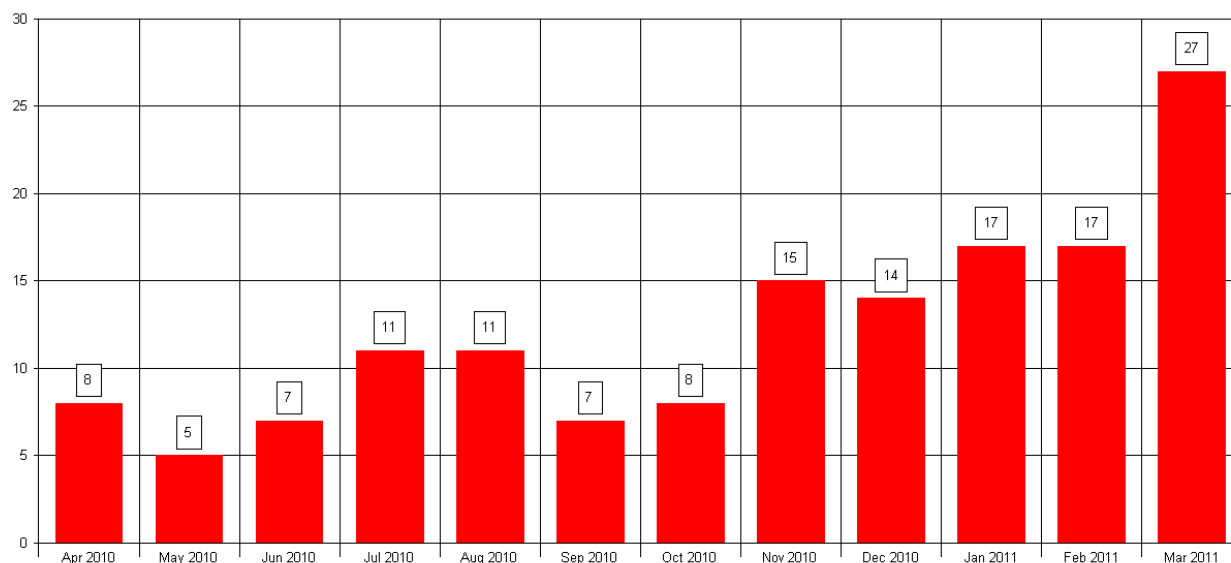
Advocate	1
Central Government Department	9
Close Relative	4
County Councillor	5
Foster Carer	1
Headteacher/Governor	4
Health Representative	1
Legal Representative	3
MP	121
Neighbour	1
Other	4
Other Local Authority	1
Parent	4
Religious Body	1
School	1
Special Guardian	1
Voluntary Organisation	4
Total	166

(4) Letters from MPs and County Councillors are usually registered and responded to as enquiries but if the constituent is eligible the elected representative is also advised of their right to make a statutory complaint.

Corporate complaints

(5) Complaints about Specialist Children's Services which do not fall under the statutory procedure are handled by the team under KCC's corporate complaints procedure. By definition, non-statutory complaints handled under the corporate complaints procedure are either not from service-users or those directly affected by the service, are from people with whom sensitive information about the client cannot be shared, or they are about a service for which the local authority is not solely responsible. For this reason they do not usually command the same priority as statutory complaints and rarely involve an independent investigation. There was also a marked rise in non-statutory complaints, particularly in the second half of the year.

SCS corporate complaints by month



(6) In addition to the above, the customer care team received 308 representations which were directed along alternative routes including child protection referrals, insurance claims, fostering panels, legal action and conference appeals. In a number of cases advice was given about potential complaints and a note of the issues made but the complainant decided to take it no further or was willing to discuss the issue informally with the social worker or team leader.

Compliments

(7) Unsolicited representations made to the local authority from external sources and which provide positive feedback about services, are registered as compliments.

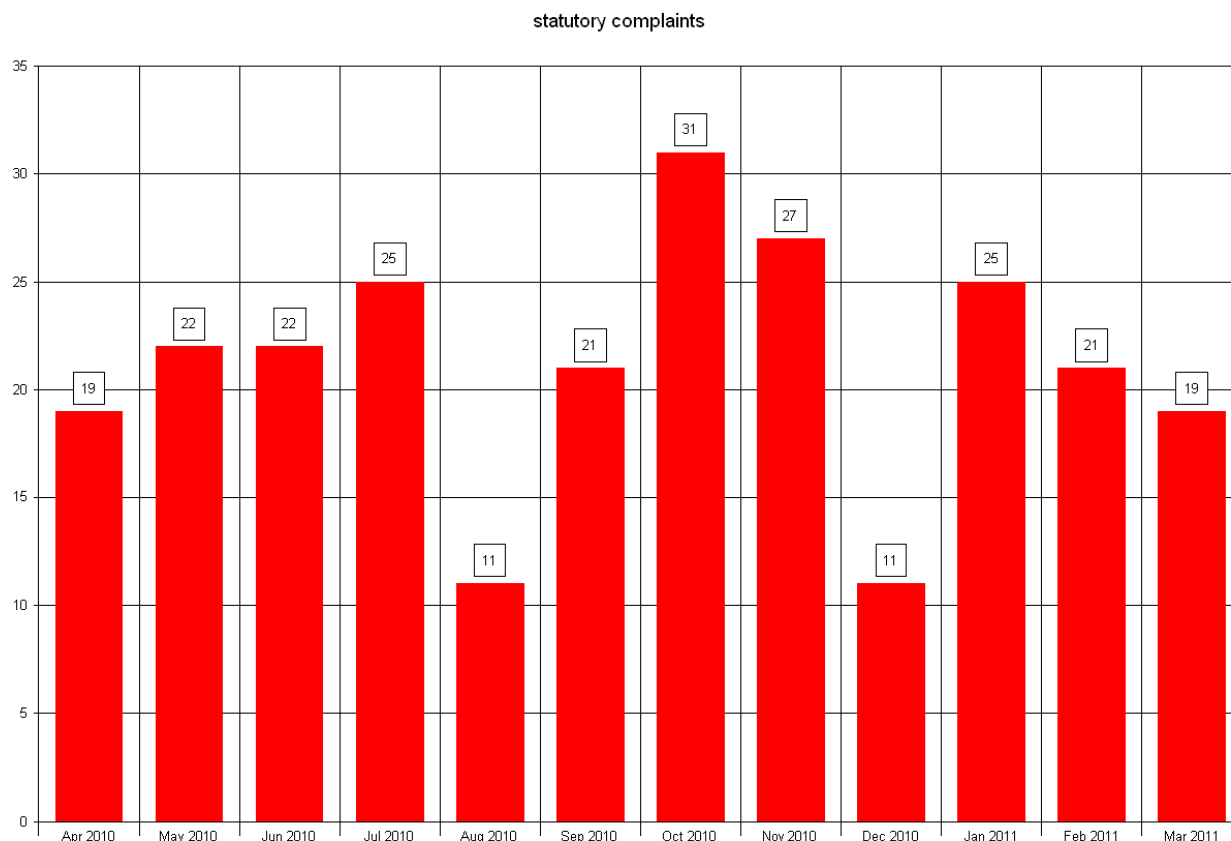
(8) The compliments recorded in 2010/11 were about the following services.

Adoption	2
Child Protection	4
Children in Need	24
Children with Disability	10
Early years	1
Looked After Children	8
Respite care	4
Other	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>54</i>

Compliments were made by the following groups

Central government department	1
Client (child or young person)	1
Close relative	4
Foster carer	6
Headteacher or school governor	4
Health professional	2
Legal professional	4
Other Local Authority	1
Parent	25
Prospective adopter	1
Service provider	4
Voluntary organisation	1

4. Statutory complaints



The number of statutory complaints at each stage and those considered by the Local Government Ombudsman

	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Stage One – Local Resolution	177	187	198	267
Stage Two – Formal Investigation	42	30	25	26*
Stage Three – Complaints Review Panel	6	5	0	2
Local Government Ombudsman referral	21	16	20	11

* 9 stage two complaints were subsequently withdrawn

4. (1) Despite the increase in the numbers of complaints and increased pressures upon local staff, efforts to resolve complaints early have continued and this is reflected in the data which shows a continuation of the trend towards greater numbers of complaints received and resolved at the first stage, and fewer escalating. The number of Stage Two investigations carried out in 2009/10 represents less than 10% of the total number of statutory complaints received (cf 24% in 2007/8).

(2) Current policy places the emphasis in the complaints process on resolution. Local managers should usually meet, or at least speak with, complainants, unless there is a good reason not to, to attempt to resolve issues before writing. This approach has been reinforced in training sessions and in support provided by the Customer Care Team.

(3) Staff are encouraged to continue to seek to resolve complaints at a local level when they escalate to Stage Two or beyond. One complaint, for example, was withdrawn following a meeting with the District Manager who gave the complainant the

opportunity to be involved in a parents' group looking at improvements to the Direct Payments process. A complaint from a young person was withdrawn once she understood more about the supported lodgings available to her and changed her mind about wanting to stay in foster care. In all, nine of the 26 Stage Two complaints registered in 2010/11 were withdrawn before investigations concluded, including two complaints made by young people.

(4) KCC has a contract with Action for Children to fulfill the statutory requirement for an Independent Person to be involved in Stage Two investigations. Action for Children continues to report that complaints have become more complex and time-consuming. This view is supported by Investigating Officers. As local staff work harder to address complaints at an early stage, those that do escalate tend to be complaints which are more complex and difficult to resolve.

Stage 2 starts 2010/11

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
4	3	2	1	2	1	1	4	1	3	4	0

(5) Three Stage Two complaints were fully upheld, nine were partially upheld and five were not upheld.

(6) Two complaints were considered by a Complaints Review Panel at Stage Three. One was from the parent of an autistic child who alleged that he had not understood what he was signing when he gave permission for his son to be placed in foster care. The main complaints were not upheld and the outcome of the panel was not dissimilar from the outcome at Stage Two. The second Panel considered complaints of an Asylum-seeking young person about her accommodation. Although the complaints were not upheld the panel was useful in providing a forum in which some agreement and compromise was reached with the complainant.

(7) Outcome of complaints considered by the Local Government Ombudsman

Maladministration causing injustice	none
Local settlement	5 complaints: £250 in respect of trouble and uncertainty to carers because no support plan was in place for children before residence orders made, £250 to parents for lost opportunity to appeal CP conference decision and £250 for having repeated incorrect information about the complainant received from the police after the police had notified the council of its error. 2 complaints were settled locally without financial redress and the LGO discontinued its investigations.
No maladministration	3 complaints
Discretion not to pursue	2 complaints
Premature	1 complaint
Decision pending	3 complaints

(8) Complainants may contact the Local Government Ombudsman at any time but the Ombudsman will refer them back to the Local Authority as premature if it has not had the opportunity to consider the complaints under its own procedures. Some people complain to the Ombudsman if they are refused access to the statutory complaints procedure on the grounds of ineligibility.

Corporate complaints procedure

(9) 139 complaints were received which fell outside the legislation and followed the corporate, two-stage complaints procedure introduced in 2009. If a complainant is not satisfied with the local response at the first stage under the Corporate complaints procedure, the Head of Service will consider the complaint at the second stage and decide, in discussion with the customer care manager, if an independent investigation is necessary. A number of the complaints were from close relatives or from parents about a process such as a Section 47 investigation which is often led by the Police, or Section 7 report requested by the court, which does not fall under the statutory procedure because it would have to be challenged in court. Many of these complaints in 2010/11 were disputing decisions taken by, or the role of the Local Authority in, a court of law.

5. Which Customer Groups made the complaints

5. (1) Statutory complaints

Originator	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Child or young person	19	29	26	36
Parent	122	116	149	191
Close relative	15	31	8	17
Carer	2	5	5	3
Foster carer	8	5	4	10
Other	10	0	1	3
Legal representative	1	4	4	4
Prospective adopter	0	2	1	0
Special Guardian	0	1	0	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>178</i>	<i>193</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>267</i>

6. The types of complaints made

6. (1) This section sets out the issues raised by complainants: what the complaints were about. Most complaints were not upheld but nevertheless provide feedback on how people directly affected by services experience them.

Assessment	5
Attitude of staff	20
Behaviour of staff	58
Breach of confidentiality	13
building	1
Contact with staff	6
Delay	2
Direct payments	1
Discrimination	2
Disputed decision	72
Financial assessment	2
Foster carers	6
Housing/accommodation	1
Incorrect information / advice given	2
Incorrect personal information held	3
Lack of information	7
Lack of provision	5
Lack of support	40
Needs not met	10
Other	3
Policy	2
Request for service	2
Respite care	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>267</i>

Attitude and behaviour of staff

(2) It is common for complainants to personalise their disagreement with decisions made or to focus their distress about the situation they find themselves in onto the worker with whom they have most contact. The complaints reflect a public perception that decisions are taken by individual social workers in isolation and that a change of social worker could result in a different decision. Many of the complaints are in connection with cases in care proceedings or child protection.

Delay

(3) There were fewer complaints about delays last year but an increase in the number of complaints about mistakes and the quality of information provided. While numbers have reduced there continue to be some complaints about delays in OT assessments and receiving equipment. Other delays raised were about processing payments.

Breach of confidentiality

(4) There was a marked increase in the number of complaints about breaches of confidentiality; this continues to be a serious issue. 11 of the 17 (including non-statutory) complaints were upheld and breaches had led to people being placed at risk in some cases.

Disputed decision

(5) Once again this is the most common subject of complaints, particularly in complaints from children and young people.

(6) A number of complaints were received from or about homeless young people and were critical about the application of the protocols put in place to comply with the Southwark Judgement in Kent. Some complaints on this subject have more recently been subject to investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman.

(7) As in previous years the majority of complaints made by children and young people were about important decisions affecting their lives, particularly concerning placements.

(8) Fourteen children and young people did not want to move from their current placements to alternative foster carers or supported living accommodation. This continues to be the main reason for complaints from children and young people.

(9) One young person was unhappy in foster care and wanted to move in with a relative; another felt that her residential placement did not meet her needs.

(10) Most children and young people complaining wanted more support. One complained that the social worker did not return calls and did not attend meetings that had been arranged. Two were concerned about financial support; one young person's financial support was due to end.

(11) One child complained that her photo album which had been taken into safe keeping had been lost by the local authority leaving her with nothing to remember her family by. Another child's presents or vouchers from her parents had been lost between placements.

(12) Most disputed decisions were from parents.

(13) There has been an increase in the number of fathers complaining that, as the police have dropped charges or a jury has found them not guilty, social services should cease to see them as a risk to their children. This continues to be a common complaint in 2011/12.

(14) A number of fathers complained that concerns they were trying to raise about their children were not taken seriously and disputed the decision to close the case. A number of estranged parents complained that the social worker was biased in favour of their ex-partners. Complaints about assessments also alleged bias of this kind.

(15) Parents often complained about a failure to keep them informed and reported feeling ignored. Examples are of not receiving school reports, not being told that their child was to be interviewed at school, not being told the outcome of assessments.

(16) Most complaints about lack of resources and lack of support were received from parents of disabled children. Some were about delays in receiving equipment needed. Another common complaint was that the child did not meet the criteria to receive a service.

(17) Five complaints were about the failure to complete Occupational Therapy assessments in a timely manner. Most were resolved by providing minor adaptations and equipment based on the screening undertaken of the referral pending a full assessment to address long-term needs.

(18) Parents of other children in need complained that they did not receive enough visits, there was no allocated social worker, or the social worker did not return their calls.

7. The outcome of complaints

7. (1) stage 1 complaints closed in 2010/11

outcome	
Explanation	149
Apology	25
Advice given	2
Issue resolved	14
Practice issues addressed	3
Complaint withdrawn	5
Financial settlement	6
Other	3
Issue addressed in court	1
Service change	2

(2) It should be noted that "Apology" is recorded only when fault has been identified. Explanation remains the most common outcome of a complaint. "Issue resolved" is recorded when the complainant has agreed resolution, usually in a meeting, before the written reply is sent.

Financial settlements

(3) There were six cases where internally resolved complaints involved a payment by KCC. Three of these were restitution for lost or damaged property. In the other cases this was due to the financial consequences of breach of confidentiality, recompense for poor communication and an agreed resolution to an error in foster care payments.

(4) None of the above was a complaint referred to the Local Government Ombudsman and most resolved at stage one of the complaints procedure. Two were the subject of a stage two investigation. In addition, three complaints investigated by the Local government Ombudsman resulted in a financial settlement (see section 2 above).

8. Details about advocacy services provided under these arrangements

8. (1) It is a requirement for the Local Authority to offer an advocate to a child or young person wishing to make a complaint. Kent County Council has contracts with Upfront to provide advocates for Looked After Children, and with Action for Children to provide advocacy for Children in Need. Action for Children also provides an independent help-line for children and associated adults to help in resolving issues at an early stage.

(2) 20 complaints were received on behalf of children and young people via advocates that they had approached themselves. 17 had approached the Upfront Advocacy service, two Voice, and one complained via the foster carer. 16 children and young people complained direct to the County Council and were given information about advocacy in every case but one. Eight of the 16 children and young people made use of the Upfront advocacy service and one contacted the Children's Rights Director.

9. Compliance with timescales, and complaints resolved within extended timescale

Statutory timescales

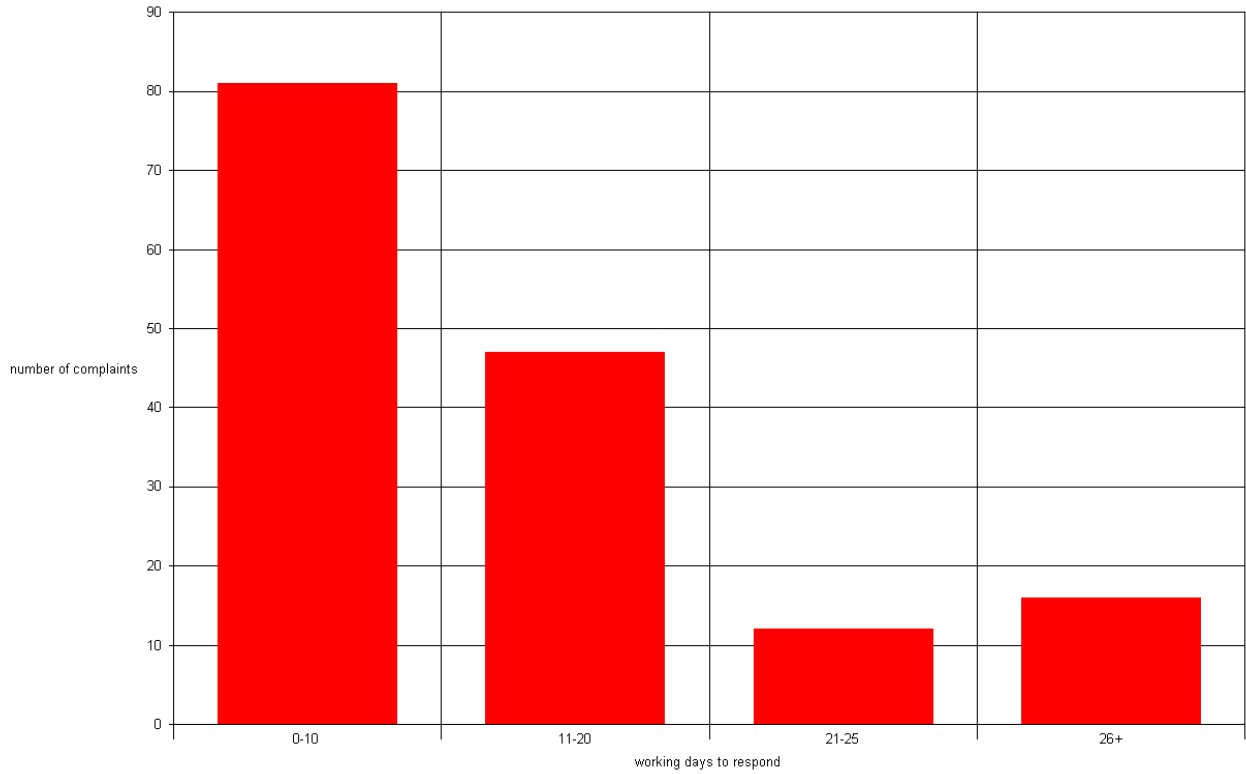
9. (1) The Local Authority must consider and try to resolve Stage One complaints within 10 working days of the start date. This can be extended by a further 10 working days where the complaint is considered to be complex.

(2) Timescales have been extended for particularly difficult or complex cases, for example when more than one agency or service is involved or when complaints are bound up with other processes such as court proceedings and safeguarding procedures. Performance against timescales has deteriorated very slightly since the previous year when 80% of statutory complaints were completed within 20 working days. Performance against statutory timescales remains better than performance for non-statutory complaints and enquiries.

- 94% of stage 1 acknowledgements were sent out within three working days.
- 53% of stage 1 responses met the 10 day timescale.
- 30% of responses with a 10-day deadline were completed within 20 days.
- 72% of stage 1 responses were extended and met the 20 day timescale.
- Overall 79% of stage 1 complaints were completed within 20 working days.

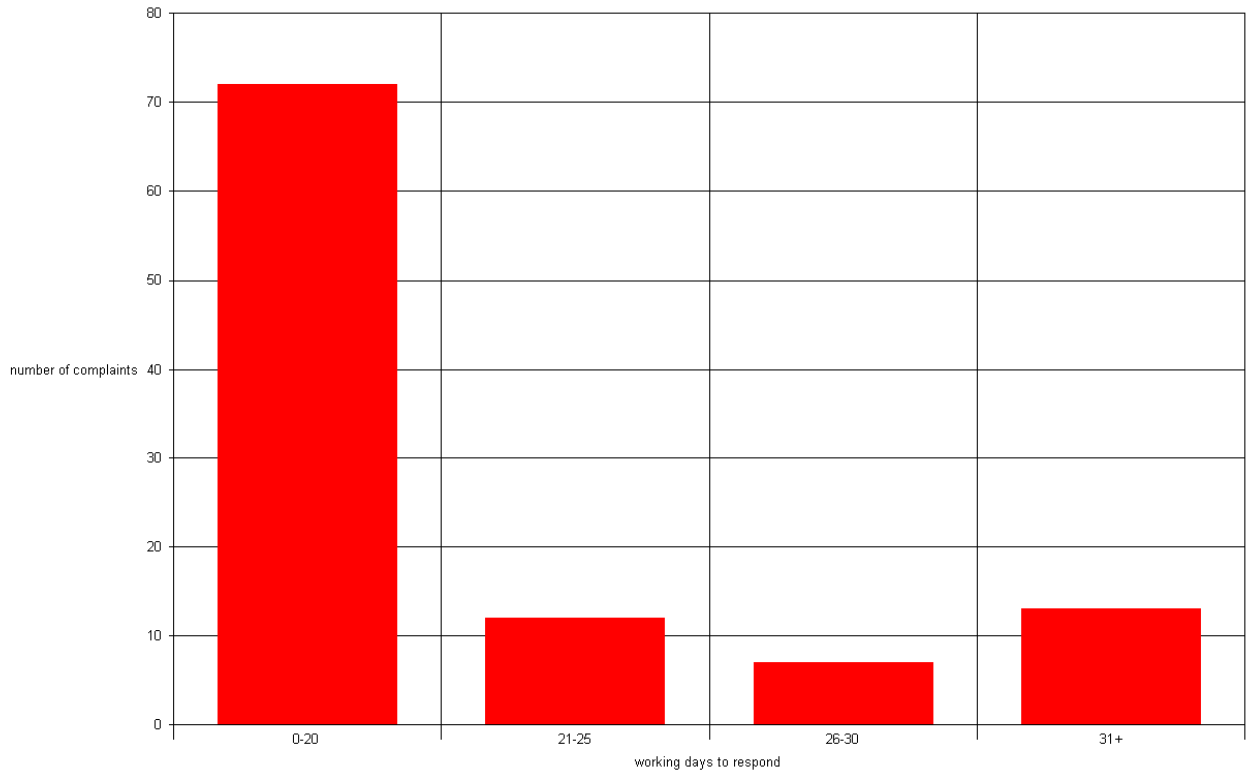
(3) The Local Authority should consider Stage Two complaints within 25 working days of the start date (the date upon which a written record of the complaints to be investigated has been agreed) but this can be extended to 65 working days where this is not possible. Investigating Officers and Action for Children report a continuation in the trend of increased complexity in the subject of complaints making a 25 day target unachievable. In most cases investigators have been able to work within the 65 day timescale, that is when staff have been available for interview and files are available and in good order. One complaint was completed within 25 working days and only one other Stage Two complaint was completed within 65 working days.

performance against 10 day timescale



statutory complaints received 1.4.10 - 31.3.11

performance against extended timescale - 20 days



statutory complaints received 1.4.10 - 31.3.11 - extended

Non-statutory timescales

(4)

- 76% of complaints handled under the corporate procedure were acknowledged within three working days
- 55% of corporate complaints met the 20 day timescale.
- 80% of enquiries were acknowledged within three working days.
- 66% of enquiries were completed within 20 working days.

(5) The data on performance against timescales for the whole service is not consistent and masks a variation between districts and service units (see Appendix 1) as well as variations across the year. Local pressures and problems with meeting timescales are drawn to the attention of the relevant managers for action at a local level. It is important to ensure that quality of response and resolution rates are also maintained. The Customer Care Team endeavours to keep complainants informed of progress and is required to offer the next stage of the procedure to complainants when timescales are not met.

10. Learning the Lessons from Complaints

10. (1) Lessons learned are taken from complaints which were upheld in full or partially or resulted in an apology, change of decision, change of policy or some other action taken as the direct consequence of a complaint. Some lessons learned came out of stage two investigations and were not necessarily the main issues that complainants had raised.

(2) Most lessons learned were practice issues.

(3) The main issues arising were as follows.

- Breaches of confidentiality
Most complaints indicated a failure to check minutes, addresses etc before distributing documents. At least one complaint was due to poor practice and lack of understanding of the Data Protection Act. Action has been taken at a local level in each case but this appears to be a widespread problem to be addressed by the Specialist Children's Services Divisional Management Team.
- Case recording
Investigating Officers and Independent Persons have highlighted this as a problem in a number of Stage Two investigations. Some complaints have been upheld because of a lack of information on the child's file. Concerns have been raised in a number of cases about the failure to be able to explain a child's story to them should they wish to see their files in future in order to understand, for example, how they came into care or why a placement broke down. Independent Persons have described on several occasions how information on a child is held in a number of different places i.e. ICS, the paper file, G drive etc. In some cases visits could only be verified in the social worker's diary. This supports Ofsted findings and is being addressed in the Improvement Plan.

- **Communication**
This continues to be an issue arising from complaints. While not always the issue raised by the complainant, the failure to explain clearly or to use appropriate words often led to misunderstandings which gave rise to complaints. One complaint gave rise to a review of a leaflet.
- **Policies and Procedures**
Some complaints highlighted the need for county-wide procedures on, for example, parents' mileage claims, the criteria for receiving a service from the Disabled Children's Service, and for improvement to the system for making payments to foster carers and for transferring cases to the 16+ service. Action is underway to address each of these issues.
- **Training**
Some complaints highlighted the need for training and/or guidance for front line staff on, for example, supporting adaptations to family homes, parental consent for accommodating a child under S20 and on the Kinship Care Policy introduced in 2010. Action has been identified and is underway or included in planned training.
- **Resources**
There has been a reduction in the number of complaints as parents are better informed and the screening of referrals is used to identify support, minor adaptations and equipment that can be provided immediately pending full assessment to identify long-term needs. Waiting lists for full assessments remain but Occupational Therapy staff have been recruited to address the problem.

(4) Lessons learned from complaints will be reviewed in detail by the Specialist Children's Services Divisional Management Team and the Training Board to ensure that all issues highlighted are being addressed appropriately.

11. Summary of statistical data about the age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and ethnicity of complainants

11. (1) Diversity information is gleaned from the client system in respect of Children and Young People but a form is sent with every complaint acknowledgement seeking information on the ethnicity, gender and age of complainants because for most complainants this information is not available.

Ethnicity of complainants 2010/11

Ethnicity	Number of Complainants
Not known	211
White British	44
Indian	0
Asian other	0
African	3
Caribbean	1
Any other ethnic group	1
White other	4
Black other	2
Mixed other	1
<i>total</i>	<i>267</i>

(2) One of the main purposes of the introduction of the complaints procedure was to provide a voice for children and young people. While closely associated adults also have the right to complain about how they are affected by services, it is important that we continue to seek ways to make the procedure more accessible to children.

Age of complainants 2010/11

Age	Statutory complaints
Under 16	18
16-19	18
20-24	13
25-59	25
60-64	1
65+	1
Not known	191
<i>total</i>	<i>267</i>

Gender

(3) 32 complaints were received jointly from both parents, 150 complainants were female and 81 were male. Gender was not known in 4 cases (complaints received via legal representatives).

Disability

(4) 8 complainants described themselves as disabled (3% of complainants). 55 said that they were not disabled and it is not known for the other 204 people making statutory complaints.

12. Review of the effectiveness of the complaints procedure

12. (1) Kent continues to operate a robust service for people making complaints about children's social services with a strong focus on resolution. The reduction in the proportion of complaints escalating to Stage Two is a positive indication that the emphasis on resolution continued throughout 2010/11. However, the level of training provided for front-line staff and monitoring reports for the management team reduced in 2010/11 because of increased demands on the service.

(2) Quarterly data on complaints, comments and compliments was produced for inclusion in corporate monitoring in 2010/11.

(3) The Customer Care Team monitors complaints by service unit and district. Local problems are brought to the attention of relevant Heads of Service. Complaints highlighting issues with policies, widespread practice across the county, or serious failings are brought to the attention of the Director. Appendix 1 has data by district and service.

(4) The practice of using in-house Investigating Officers at Stage Two provides a useful way of sharing practice and lessons learned across the county. Investigating Officers report that they take back learning points from their own investigations to their own areas of the service. Investigating Officers may be any member of staff at Team Leader level or above whose Head of Service is not also responsible for the service under investigation. Staff in the following roles have acted as Investigating Officers in 2010/11:

County Manager, FGC Service
District Manager
Preventative Service Manager
Team Leader
Principle Social Worker, C&F Team

Projects and Property Manager
Training & PD Manager
Principal Social Worker, Out Of Hours
Senior Practitioner
Area Children's Officer – Safeguarding
Performance and QA Officer.

(5) Actions needed and practice issues to be disseminated are discussed and agreed at each adjudication meeting held to decide the outcome of a stage 2 investigation. Adjudication meetings are chaired by Head of Service and outcomes shared more widely as appropriate.

(6) The Customer Care Team works with the Children's Social Services Professional Development Unit to ensure that practice issues arising from complaints are addressed in the core training programme.

(7) The Customer Care Team responded to team/unit requests for information about complaints relating to their services in 2010/11 for example, for Ofsted, for the inspection of the Fostering service and for the annual report on the Adoption Service.

(8) During 2010/11 the following training sessions were provided for staffing complaints handling:

- One day training by the Local Government Ombudsman for Investigating Officers,
- 4 half-day sessions in formal training for NQSWs using "Complaints Made Easy", and
- 4 half-day sessions for overseas social workers using "Complaints Made Easy".

(9) Quarterly data is now included in core monitoring information provided to FSC Directorate Management Team and monthly data to Heads of Service in the Specialist Children's Services Division.

(10) The first principle of the new Quality Assurance Framework for children's social services agreed as part of the Improvement Plan brings together a range of information sources to inform the council and its partners about the quality and effectiveness of Specialist Children's Services. Information from complaints and compliments will be included and considered alongside data from other sources in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of performance across the service in 2011/12.

13. Recommendations

13. (1) Members of the Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to NOTE the information presented about complaints and enquiries received about the service, the effective management of complaints that has been established, the improvements made by the Directorate in response to lessons learned from complaints and the plans to make further improvements proposed.

Background documents: none

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Appendix 1

	Statutory complaints received	Statutory complaints within 20 days	Stage 2 starts	Stage 2 withdrwn	Stage 2 (completed) total as % of Statutory complaints received	Corporate complaints (non-stat) received	Corporate complaints within 20 day timescale	Enquiries received	Enquiries within 20 day timescale	Compliments received
16+	11	89%	2	1	9%	4	75%	3	33%	0
UASC	5	100%	0	-	-	2	0%	3	50%	0
Ashford	33	84%	3	-	9%	10	67%	7	89%	4
Canterbury	17	84%	1	1	-	10	75%	11	78%	1
Dartford	11	83%	0	-	-	4	0%	7	57%	1
Dover	21	68%	1	1	5%	9	63%	12	69%	10
Gravesend	15	80%	3	1	13%	3	67%	10	60%	3
Maidstone	16	79%	1	-	6%	8	80%	3	25%	5
Sevenoaks & Swanley	12	91%	2	-	17%	9	56%	5	60%	1
Shepway	12	60%	1	1	-	9	57%	10	100%	3
Swale	18	71%	0	-	-	16	47%	10	50%	2
Thanet	27	61%	3	2	4%	14	50%	26	50%	2
Tonbridge & Malling	12	50%	1	-	8%	6	67%	13	39%	1
Tunbridge Wells	13	80%	0	-	-	7	20%	4	75%	0
EK DCS	15	93%	4	1	20%	3	100%	8	71%	6
WK DCS	18	82%	1	-	6%	0	100%	15	85%	4
Sensory Loss	2	100%	0	-	-	1	100%	0	-	0
Residential units	1	100%	0	-	-	0	-	0	-	3
Adoption	0	-	0	-	-	3	0%	1	100%	1
Fostering	9	88%	2	1	11%	6	38%	2	50%	2
FGC	0	-	0	-	-	0	-	1	100%	0
Out of Hours	0	-	0	-	-	3	100%	0	-	0
CP chairs, LADO, crim injures and IROs	0	-	0	-	-	1	0%	0	-	1
Early years	0	-	0	-	-	7	0%	8	86%	1

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By: Head of Democratic Services

To: Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 28 September 2011

Subject: **UPDATE ON SELECT COMMITTEE WORK**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report updates Members on current and future Select Committee work and invites suggestions for future Select Committee Topic Reviews.

Current Select Committee Review Work

1. The following reviews are underway:-

Dementia - The Select Committee, Chaired by Mrs T Dean, has received the first draft of its report, which is now being amended for consultation with stakeholders and contributors. The Select Committee will take into account comments made before it agrees the final version of the report. It is intended that the final report will be submitted to Cabinet on 5 December and County Council on 15 December 2011.

The contacts in Democratic Services for this Select Committee are: Research Officer Sue Frampton (01622 694993) and Democratic Services Officer Christine Singh (01622 694334).

Educational Attainment at Key Stage 2 - The Select Committee, Chaired by Mr C T Wells, is looking at the reasons for variations in Key Stage 2 performance within Kent Schools, with a focus on schools in areas of deprivation.

During June and July, the Select Committee had briefing sessions from Heads of Service and officers from Districts for the schools selected for the focus group, in preparation for visits. The Select Committee is planning to visit ten schools in September and October 2011. Work is also being carried out to gather insights from pupils and parents and this is being facilitated by colleagues in the Directorates.

The Committee is expected to meet in November or early December 2011 to discuss feedback from visits, hold final hearings and consider areas for recommendation. It is expected that its final report will go to Cabinet in April 2012 and then to the next available meeting of the County Council.

The contacts in Democratic Services for this Select Committee are: Research Officer Pippa Cracknell (01622 694178) and Assistant Democratic Services Manager Denise Fitch (01622 694269).

The Student Journey - This review, Chaired by Mr K Smith, cuts across Regeneration and Economic Development POSC, Customer and Communities POSC and Education, Learning and Skills POSC. An extensive programme of evidence-gathering hearings with key stakeholders, including representatives from business and education, took place in June and July, and further evidence gathering from young people, with visits to schools and colleges, will continue through September and October. Recommendations will then be drafted in November. It is intended that the Select Committee will submit its final report to Cabinet in April 2012 and to County Council in May 2012.

The contacts in Democratic Services for this Select Committee are: Research Officer Gaetano Romagnuolo (01622 694292) and Democratic Services Officer Theresa Grayell (01622 694277).

Suggestions for future Select Committee work

2. A review on Domestic Abuse has been suggested, arising from the Customer and Communities POSC in July 2011, meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee. This review relates to several areas of work, including family cohesion and avoiding children going into care, adult services and public health and communities. A formal proposal is currently being prepared for consideration by the Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 2 November.

3. If Members have any suggestions of topics they would like to put forward for consideration for inclusion in the future topic review work programme, they should contact the Democratic Services Officer for this Committee.

Recommendation:-

4. Members are asked to note the review work currently underway, and future work suggested, and advise the Democratic Services Officer of any topics which they would like to put forward for consideration for inclusion in the future Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme.

Theresa Grayell
Democratic Services Officer

Background Information: *Nil*

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