

By: Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member, Specialist Children's Services  
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To: Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee – 22 March 2012

Subject: **SPECIALIST CHILDREN'S SERVICES CORE MONITORING  
PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2011**

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This report provides Members with the Core Monitoring performance report for the third quarter of the reporting year 2011/12

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## Introduction

1. The Core Monitoring report is produced on a quarterly basis. This is the third quarter's report, which updates Members on progress against our key performance areas, as identified within Bold Steps. The Specialist Children's Services (SCS) outturn for Quarter 3 is attached as Appendix 1.

## Key points

2. (1) The SCS Section of the Core Monitoring Report covers seven performance measures, commentary on progress against these measures is provided below:

- **Number of children's social care cases not allocated to a social worker for over 28 Days**  
SCS continue to effectively manage the allocation of cases which is demonstrated in the consistent achievement of the Improvement Plan target to have no more than 100 children's social cases not allocated to a social worker for over 28 days. Cases that remain unallocated for more than 28 days are now rare, and for December 2011 the figure was 15.
- **Number of Initial Assessments in progress and outside of timescale**  
The Improvement Notice requirement in relation to this measure was to reduce the number of initial assessments outside of timescale to 200. This was achieved by June 2011 and continues to be sustained within target. For Quarter 3, the figure as at 31/12/11 was 19.
- **Number of Looked After Children (LAC) per 10,000 children aged under 18**  
The number of children who are Looked After continues to be a challenge although the numbers do appear to have stabilised overall. For Quarter 3 the rate per 10,000 was 56.7 against a target rate of 47.0. If Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) LAC were to be excluded the performance rate for 'citizen' LAC would be 50.4. The figures and rates are shown separately within the report to demonstrate the impact that USAC have on performance in this area. The number

of USAC entering Kent is outside the control of KCC, whereas there are measures that can be taken to manage activity in the 'citizen' LAC population.

Many of the plan and strategies that aim to reduce numbers of 'citizen' LAC are only just beginning to be realised in operational terms, and some are still to be implemented.

The restructure proposes the development of dedicated Adolescent Teams in all Areas, as currently not all Districts can access this type of service. These in-house teams will be supplemented and enhanced by the commissioning of an adolescent focused crisis response service. The service specification has been completed and the tender process will commence in early March. Work is also underway to go out to tender for a provider who can better manage the demands posed by 16 and 17 year olds who requires supported housing (Southwark judgement).

Similarly other high level family support services which aim to prevent family breakdown have yet to come on-line, although the tenders are underway. The combination of the dedicated Looked After Children's Teams, and the arrival of Coram to manage Adoption Services, will see a renewed focus on tackling drift in care planning to ensure that children benefit from permanent care arrangements outside of the care system whenever possible.

It is not anticipated that there will be any significant reductions in LAC numbers until these plans are fully implemented and embedded.

- **Percentage of children leaving care who are adopted**

The Improvement Notice target for this performance measure for 2011/12 was 11%. Quarter 3 performance shows a rate of 8.1%. It should be noted that as the calculation for this measure is taken as a percentage against the total number of children leaving care, that figure will also include USAC. Just over 20% of the care leavers to date have been USAC which has a negative impact on Kent's performance. If USAC care leavers were excluded from the calculation Kent's performance against this measure as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 would be 10.4%.

The Adoption Service is now under the management of Coram, and a project Manager and County Adoption Manager are now in place. Work has already begun to review all children who have an adoption plan and who are waiting for an adoption placement.

- **Number of children subject to a CP Plan, per 10,000 of children under the age of 18**

The number of children subject to a CP Plan continues to reduce. In December 2011 there were 1,258 children subject to a plan, in comparison with 1,616 at the end of the first quarter of 2011/12. This reduction has largely been achieved as a result of the sustained focus on ensuring that the right children are subject to CP Plan, resulting in significant numbers subject to de-planning. Greater scrutiny of existing plans, and tighter application of thresholds by District Managers and CP chairs is also contributing to the reduction.

Improved Children in Need planning processes appear to be serving to reassure other agencies that children who are subject to a CP Plan will continue to be in receipt of appropriate levels of intervention.

At a rate of 39.9 per 10,000, performance against this measure at the end of Quarter 3 was below the target rate of 40.2.

- **Percentage of case holding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers**  
The percentage of the social worker establishment posts held by permanent staff has increased slightly this quarter to 88.7%.

Measures are in place to boost the recruitment of experience social workers, and thereby reduce reliance on agency staff. These measures include the employment of a recruitment company, TMP, to lead the next phase of the recruitment campaign. Workforce information demonstrates that we are very slightly over establishment for case-holding posts but proposals for the SCS restructure will address the over-establishment issue by ensuring that teams have, within their revised establishment, sufficient staff to undertake the work required in every District.

- **Percentage of children subject to a child protection plan for two or more years**  
A requirement of the Improvement Programme was the reduction of the percentage of child protection plans lasting two years or more to 6% over the period 2012-13. For Quarter 3 of 2011-12 Kent's performance was 8.9%, showing a continued reduction from 11.2% in Quarter 1.

A programme of review is currently underway for all those cases where the children have been subject to a Child Protection Plan for more than eighteen months to try to prevent them moving into the two year plus category.

## **Recommendations**

3. (1) Members are asked to NOTE the Quarter 3 performance update.

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*Background documents:* None

# **KCC Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 3, 2011/12**

Cabinet, 2012



## Key to RAG (Red/Amber/Green) ratings applied to KPIs

<b>GREEN</b>	Target has been achieved or exceeded
<b>AMBER</b>	Performance is behind target but within acceptable limits
<b>RED</b>	Performance is significantly behind target and is below an acceptable pre-defined minimum *
↑	Performance has improved relative to targets set
↓	Performance has worsened relative to targets set

\* In future, when annual business plan targets are set, we will also publish the minimum acceptable level of performance for each indicator which will cause the KPI to be assessed as Red when performance falls below this threshold.

## Performance Assurance Team (PAT)

PAT's role is to consider and challenge the action plans for improving performance, including addressing constraints and barriers and to provide additional reassurances to elected members that the action plans and the information included within this report are robust.

PAT meets monthly and is chaired by the Deputy Managing Director. Membership includes a nominated director from each directorate. It also includes two non-executive directors (NEDs) who are staff from the grass roots of the organisation. This ensures PAT has cross-organisation membership from all levels to provide a 'whole organisation' approach to improvement.

## Data quality note

All data included in this report for current financial year are provisional unaudited data and are categorised as management information. All results may be subject to later change.

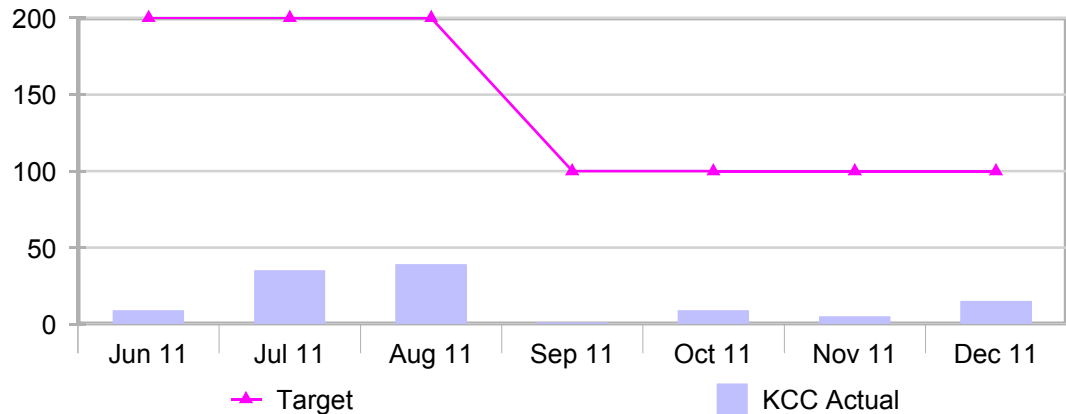
## Summary of Performance for our KPIs

Indicator Description	Service Area	Page	Current Status	Previous Status	Direction of Travel
Number of children's social care cases not allocated to a social worker for over 28 days	Children's Social Care		Green	Green	↓
Number of initial assessments in progress and out of timescale	Children's Social Care		Green	Green	↑
Number of children looked after per 10,000 children aged under 18	Children's Social Care		Red	Red	↓
Percentage of children leaving care who are adopted	Children's Social Care		Red	Red	↓
Number of children subject to a child protection plan per 10,000 children aged under 18	Children's Social Care		Amber	Red	↑
Percentage of establishment caseholding posts filled by qualified social workers	Children's Social Care		Amber	Amber	↑
Percentage of children subject to a child protection plan for two or more years	Children's Social Care		Red	Red	↑

**Number of children's social care cases not allocated to a social worker for over 28 days**

**Green** ↓

<b>Bold Steps Priority/Core Service Area</b>	Ensure we provide the most robust and effective public protection arrangements	<b>Bold Steps Ambition</b>	To tackle disadvantage
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Jenny Whittle	<b>Director</b>	Jean Imray
<b>Portfolio</b>	Specialist Children's Service	<b>Division</b>	Specialist Children's Service



**Data Notes.**

Tolerance: Lower values are better  
 Unit of measure: Number  
 Data Source: ICS

Data is reported as count at each month end.

The Improvement Plan phase 1 target was to reduce the number to 200 by August 2011 and Improvement Plan phase 2 changed this target to 100 to be achieved by April 2012.

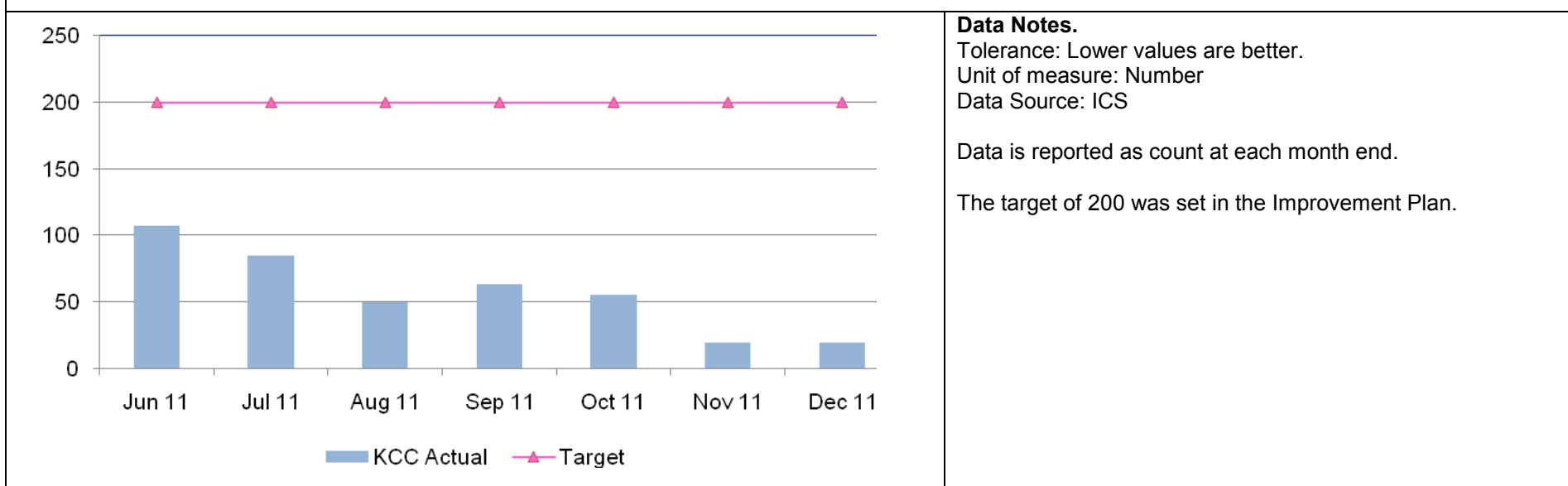
Trend Data – month end							
	Jun 11	Jul 11	Aug 11	Sep 11	Oct 11	Nov 11	Dec 11
KCC Result	9	35	39	1	9	5	15
Target	200	200	200	100	100	100	100
Rag Rating	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>

**Commentary**

This target has been achieved and is being maintained.

**Number of initial assessments in progress and out of timescale** **Green** ↑

<b>Bold Steps Priority/Core Service Area</b>	Ensure we provide the most robust and effective public protection arrangements	<b>Bold Steps Ambition</b>	To tackle disadvantage
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Trend Data – month end	Jun 11	Jul 11	Aug 11	Sep 11	Oct 11	Nov 11	Dec 11
	KCC Result	107	85	50	63	55	19
Target	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Rag Rating	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Green</b>

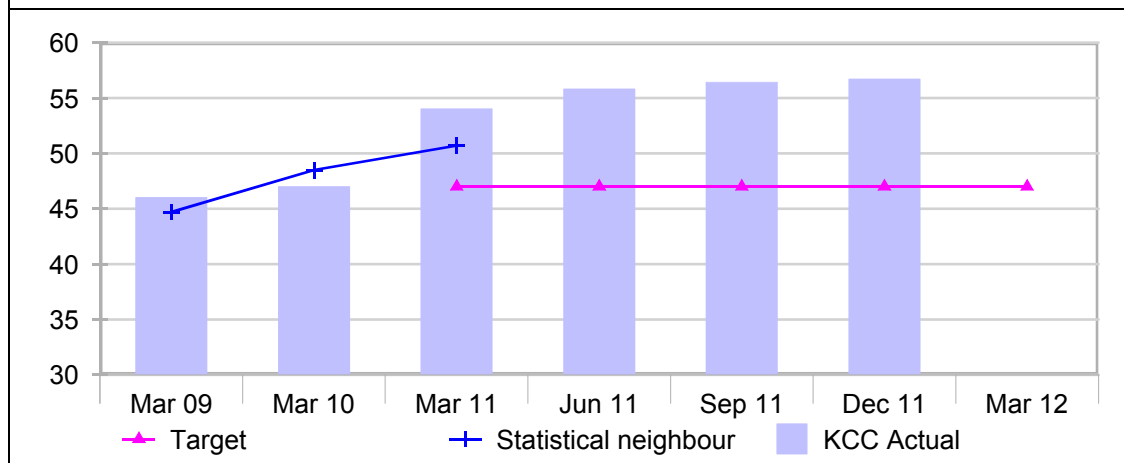
**Commentary**

This target has been achieved and is being maintained.

**Number of looked after children (LAC) per 10,000 children aged under 18** **Red** ↓

<b>Bold Steps Priority/Core Service Area</b>	Improve services for the most vulnerable people in Kent	<b>Bold Steps Ambition</b>	To tackle disadvantage
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<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Jenny Whittle	<b>Director</b>	Jean Imray
<b>Portfolio</b>	Specialist Children's Service	<b>Division</b>	Specialist Children's Service



**Data Notes.**

Tolerance: Lower values are better  
Unit of measure: Number per 10,000 children  
Data Source: ICS for current year and DfE for previous year and statistical neighbours.

Data is reported as the position at each quarter end. Counts rounded to nearest 5.  
Data shown in the graph includes unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC).  
The citizen count (excluding UASC) is also shown below in the data table.

Trend Data – quarter end	Previous Years			Current Year			
	Mar 09	Mar 10	Mar 11	Jun 11	Sep 11	Dec 11	Mar 12
KCC Result	46	47	54	56.0	56.4	56.7	
Target			47	47	47	47	47
Statistical neighbour	45	48	51				
Rag Rating	Amber	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	
Total number of LAC	1,420	1,475	1,695	1,745	1,765	1,775	
Citizen LAC (non-UASC)	1,145	1,245	1,460	1,510	1,555	1,575	

**Commentary**

Numbers of looked after children (LAC) in Kent continue to increase, from 1,695 in March 2011 rising to 1,775 in December 2011. LAC targets by district are now agreed and have been incorporated into performance monitoring. The result includes unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) which is a pressure in Kent. If this calculation was made excluding UASC it would be 50.4. Much of the immediate focus of the Children Social Services' Improvement Plan has been around tackling the backlog of cases (as anticipated, some of which will have resulted in children becoming looked after) and improving throughput and caseloads. Work is underway to develop a projected downwards trajectory in the light of the actions listed below.

**Number of looked after children (LAC) per 10,000 children aged under 18** **Red ↓**

**What actions are we taking to improve performance (and drivers of performance)**

Current actions include:

- Improving the percentage of children who are adopted (see specific actions against the next indicator)
- Identifying end dates for all LAC
- Robust gate-keeping of decisions to take children into care.
- Robust tracking of permanency planning

In the longer term, the following actions will impact on LAC numbers:

- Increased investment in a range of prevention and early intervention services, particularly in adolescent intervention services and in high-level family support
- Scoping out work needed for speedier responses to vulnerable adolescents, including an “invest to save” proposal on adolescent services

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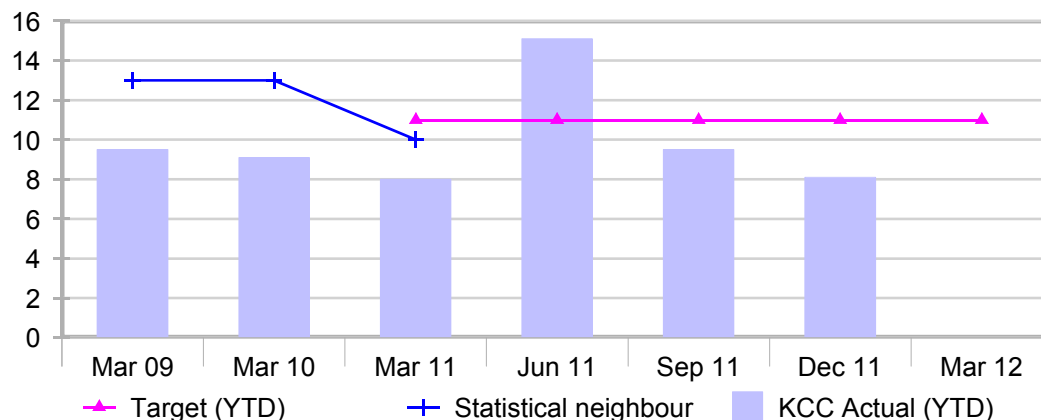
**Risks and mitigating actions**

Growing numbers of looked after children bring increased funding pressures, making it even more difficult to find the resources to invest in early intervention and preventative services. Despite the financial climate, ways are being found to invest in preventative services to reduce LAC numbers long-term, and this will be a key theme in the Phase 2 Improvement Plan.

## Percentage of children leaving care who are adopted

**Red** ↓

<b>Bold Steps Priority/Core Service Area</b>	Improve services for the most vulnerable people in Kent	<b>Bold Steps Ambition</b>	To tackle disadvantage
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Jenny Whittle	<b>Director</b>	Jean Imray
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### Data Notes.

Tolerance: Higher values are better

Unit of measure: Percentage

Data Source: ICS

Results are reported as year to date (i.e. Mar 11 is the result for 12 months to Mar 11, whereas Jun 11 is for the three months to Jun 11).

Counts rounded to nearest 5.

The indicator is calculated as the number of children adopted as a percentage of the number of children who ceased to be looked after.

Trend Data – year to date	Previous Years			Current Year			
	Mar 09	Mar 10	Mar 11	Jun 11	Sep 11	Dec 11	Mar 12
KCC Result	9.5%	9.1%	8.0%	15.1%	9.5%	8.1%	
Target			11%	11%	11%	11%	11%
Statistical neighbour	13%	13%	10%				
Rag Rating	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	
Number of adoptions	75	70	60	25	40	50	

### Commentary

Analysis suggests the 11% target (as set in the Improvement Notice) is a very challenging one, and would require 91 adoptions in the year (this is a projected figure as the total number of care leavers will be unknown until the year end). The inclusion of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) impacts negatively upon Kent's performance.

In December 2011 there were 105 children living in their permanent homes. Fifty of these had court orders granted for Adoption in the year-to-date, the remaining 55 are living in their adoption placements awaiting the final adoption order to be granted by the Courts. There are a further 93 children for whom adoption is the plan, and Placement Orders have been granted. These children are awaiting adoption placements.

## Percentage of children leaving care who are adopted

Red ↓

### What actions are we taking to improve performance (and drivers of performance)

Improving the percentage of children who are adopted by:

- A contract has been signed with Thomas Coram who will manage the Adoption Service on Kent's behalf. A contract manager is now in place.
- Robust system in place to ensure assessments are given priority - 61 assessments are scheduled for approval by March 2012
- Martin Narey has completed the review of adoption systems and processes to identify how adoption can be speeded up and the findings are being actioned
- District managers and adoption leads jointly monitoring the progress of all children requiring adoption
- Permanency policy and prompts have been agreed; workshops on permanency conducted; Permanency Plans now identified by the second looked after children review
- Performance reporting monitors the percentage of children adopted
- Tracking process established to follow children identified for adoption and ensure there is no drift in their planning.

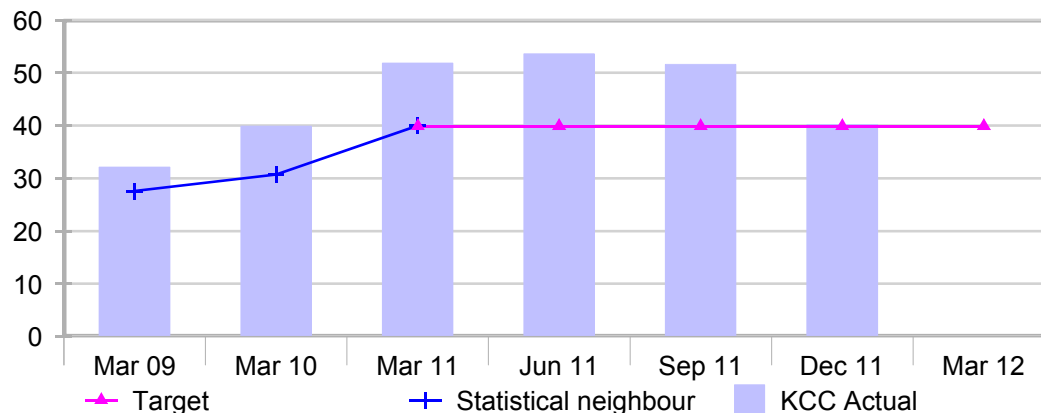
### Risks and mitigating actions

- Capacity to undertake sufficient assessments of prospective adopters.
- Delays in court processes
- Recruitment delays

## Number of children subject to a child protection plan, per 10,000 children aged under 18

**Amber** ↑

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### Data Notes.

Tolerance: Lower values are better

Unit of measure: Number per 10,000 children

Data Source: ICS for current year and DfE for previous year.

Data is reported as the position at each quarter end.

Trend Data – quarter end	Previous Years			Current Year			
	Mar 09	Mar 10	Mar 11	Jun 11	Sep 11	Dec 11	Mar 12
KCC Result	32.1	39.9	52.1	53.8	51.6	40.2	
Target			39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9
Statistical neighbour	27.6	30.7	40.0				
Rag Rating	Amber	Red	Red	Red	Red	Amber	
Number of children	1,022	1,243	1,621	1,676	1,616	1,258	

### Commentary

The numbers of children subject to a child protection plan has seen a noticeable decline during the last quarter, with the total reducing to 1,258 (December 2011).

Much of the immediate focus of the Improvement Plan has been around tackling the backlog of cases (some of which will have resulted in children becoming subject to a child protection plan) and improving throughput, which would impact adversely on this indicator and was anticipated. Actions in place as part of the improvement plan have already started to impact on this indicator.

### What actions are we taking to improve performance (and drivers of performance)

- Review and undertake change promotion work on current cases where children have been subject to a child protection plan for over 18 months;
- Amending current child protection procedures to reduce the number of children subject to parallel LAC and child protection plans;

## Number of children subject to a child protection plan, per 10,000 children aged under 18

Amber ↑

- Strengthening child protection and conference processes, including assessments, reports and multi-agency working;
- Work to strengthen Kent Safeguarding Children's Board functions, including its scrutiny function to ensure that agencies are engaged effectively in multi-agency planning in respect of child protection;
- Training conference chairs in order to ensure more focussed, outcome-based planning;
- More rigorous gatekeeping of the child protection work;
- Review of section 47 processes;
- Increasing options for step down services;
- Strengthening of training, both internal and multi-agency, in respect of child protection conferences.

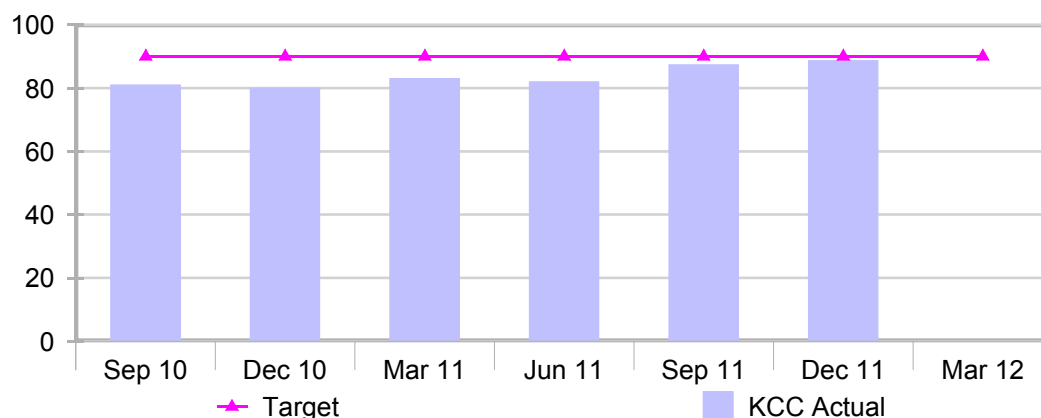
### Risks and mitigating actions

A potential risk is the current drive to reduce looked after children, which will mean increased pressure to manage risk in the community.

## Percentage of caseholding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers

**Amber** ↑

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### Data Notes.

Tolerance: Higher values are better

Unit of measure: Percentage

Data Source: SCS Weekly Performance Report – Week Ending 25/12/11.

Data is reported as the position at each quarter end.

Posts held by agency staff are not included in the figures for this indicator.

Trend Data – quarter end	Previous Year			Current Year			
	Sep 10	Dec 10	Mar 11	Jun 11	Sep 11	Dec 11	Mar 12
KCC Result	81%	80%	83%	82%	87.4%	88.7%	
Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Rag Rating	Amber	Red	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	
Percentage agency staff	6.0%	8.8%	16.1%	23%	25%	13.5%	

### Commentary

This target is about recruiting permanent staff, not about managing vacancies. Indeed, when numbers of agency staff are taken into consideration, currently the division is over establishment for qualified social workers (111%) – but the strategy is to reduce dependence on agency staff.

**What actions are we taking to improve performance (and drivers of performance)**

## Percentage of caseholding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers

Amber ↑

The robust workforce strategy and compelling offer was agreed by the Improvement Board and Cabinet in May and is being implemented.

4 separate campaigns have been delivered since March 2011 which have resulted in the appointment of

- 18 Experienced Social Workers
- 15 Principal Social Workers
- 7 Team Leaders

There is a continuing focus on the recruitment of experienced social workers to fill vacancies and reduce the requirement for agency staff.

We will continue to monitor the recruitment processes in terms of numbers of applications submitted, shortlisted, interviewed, offered and appointed.

Discussions will be held with Kent Top Temps with regard to the engagement and placement of agency staff in order to clarify rates, quality assurance and customer relationships.

### Risks and mitigating actions

The division still has a high proportion of staff who are recently qualified. The workforce strategy is not only about exceeding the 90% target, but also improving the balance of experienced and newly qualified social workers, and actions to mitigate this are included in the strategy.

The review to ascertain whether the current establishment rates for Social Workers are appropriate may potentially result in an increase in the vacancy rates.

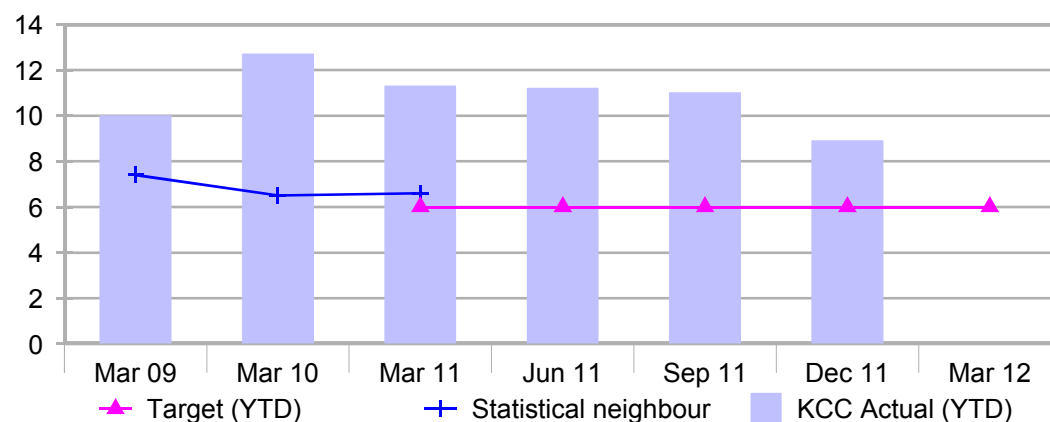
## Percentage of children subject to a child protection plan for two or more years

Red ↑

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## Percentage of children subject to a child protection plan for two or more years

**Red ↑**



### Data Notes.

Tolerance: Lower values are better

Unit of measure: Percentage

Data Source: ICS

Data is reported as financial year to date (i.e. Mar 11 is the result for 12 months to Mar 11, whereas Jun 11 is for the three months to Jun 11).

Trend Data – year to date	Previous Years			Current Year			
	Mar 09	Mar 10	Mar 11	Jun 11	Sep 11	Dec 11	Mar 12
KCC Result	10%	12.7%	11.3%	11.2%	11.0%	8.9%	
Target			6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Statistical neighbour	7.4	6.5	6.6				
Rag Rating	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	
Number of children	85	100	126	46	93	136	

### Commentary

The indicator is calculated as the percentage of children ceasing to be subject to a child protection plan who had been subject to that plan for two or more years. There has been a move in performance in the last quarter, from 11.0% in September 2011 to 8.9% in December 2011.

### What actions are we taking to improve performance (and drivers of performance)

Current actions being taken to improve performance include:

- Review and undertake change promotion work on current cases where children have been subject to a child protection plan for over 18 months to try to prevent them moving into the 2 year plus category;
- Review and take action to ensure timely decision making and progression of all child protection cases 2 years plus.

## Percentage of children subject to a child protection plan for two or more years

Red ↑

- Strengthening child protection and conference processes, reports and assessment work;
- Strengthening KSCB's scrutiny function to ensure effective multi-agency engagement in child protection planning;
- Training conference chairs on outcome-based planning;
- More rigorous gate-keeping of the child protection process;
- Increasing options for step down services;
- Strengthening of training, both internal and multi-agency, in respect of child protection conferences;
- Tracking planned case conferences of children who have been subject to a child protection plan for 18 months to ensure timely decision making and progression

### Risks and mitigating actions

The current work underway to improve throughput and reduce drift in child protection planning will impact adversely on this indicator because it is measured by the number of children subject to a plan for 2 years or more when the child protection plan ends. This will inevitably lead to a percentage increase before work begins to have an impact and therefore a drop in performance is to be anticipated.