

Specialist Children's Services

Bold Steps Priority/Core Service Area	Ensure we provide the most robust and effective public protection arrangements
Cabinet Member	Jenny Whittle
Portfolio	Specialist Children's Service (SCS)
Director	Mairead MacNeil
Division	Specialist Children's Service (SCS)

Performance Indicator Summary

	Previous RAG	Current RAG	Direction of Travel
Initial assessments completed within 10 days	AMBER	AMBER	↓
Case holding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers	RED	RED	↑
Children subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	GREEN	GREEN	↑
Children subject to a child protection plan for two or more years at the point of de-registration	GREEN	GREEN	↓
Percentage of children leaving care who are adopted	GREEN	GREEN	↓
Children in Care with 3 or more placements in the last 12 months	AMBER	AMBER	↑

Specialist Children's Services implemented at replacement IT system on the 9th December 2013, moving from the Capita ONE ICS system, to Liquid Logic's system which Kent have named Liberi. As this implementation occurred during the Quarter 3 reporting period the data contained within this report uses the latest information available. This will vary across the performance measures but the source or the data, and the applicable timescale is clearly indicated in the updates provided within this Report.

As part of the change of IT system Specialist Children's Services moved away from using separate Initial and Core Assessments and commenced the use of a Single Assessment. The last available performance figure for the measure of **initial assessments completed within timescales** is for the 15th November 2013, when performance for the year to date was 83.3%. Although this was below the internal target of 90% Kent's performance compares favourably to national and statistical neighbour averages.

The percentage of **case holding social worker posts held by qualified social workers** increased slightly in the quarter to December 2013 to 76.2%. The majority of vacancies for social workers are currently being filled by agency staff. Achieving the target of 90% continues to be challenging.

The performance measure for the percentage of children **becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second time** has been updated in line with national changes and

now only includes new plans that are within 24 months of a previous plan. Performance for the year to date to November 2013 was 8.2%, which is within the banding set for optimum performance.

The percentage of **children subject to a child protection plan lasting two or more years at the point of de-registration** has reduced from 8.0% in the year to March 2013 to 5.4% in the year to date (April – November 2013). This is below the target set of 6%.

The percentage of **looked after children who are adopted** in the first eight months of the reporting year (April - November 2013) was 15.3%. This is an improvement in performance against previous years and the target for 2013/14 continues to be exceeded.

The percentage of **children in care with 3 or more placements** within twelve months has reduced in the third quarter (to November 2013) to 10.5%. This is below the latest published rates for Statistical Neighbours, which for March 2013 was 11.0%.

Children's (Social Care) Transformation Update

The Children's (Social Care) Transformation Programme brings together efforts that build on the three phases of the Children's Services Improvement Programme (which began in February 2011), and strategies to improve efficiency within the services.

In line with 'Facing the Challenge' the efficiency side of the Transformation Programme will ensure that we deliver maximum value for money and the best possible service within available resources. By combining the two disciplines of continued service improvement, and efforts to deliver efficiency savings, we will build a sustainable children's social care service with a clear vision, that is effectively led, and that maintains a focus on the needs of the most vulnerable children at its core.

Progress of the Transformation Programme is overseen by the Children's Transformation Board, which meets monthly. The Board is chaired by Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director for Families and Social Care. The Children's Transformation Board feeds into an overarching 0-25 Portfolio Board which oversees cross-directorate transformation for the full provision of services, from Specialist Children's Services, Disabled Children's Services, Adolescent support and Youth Offending, to education, skills and employability.

As a combination of the improvements recognised by Ofsted, evidence submitted by the Council, and by recommendation of the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Improvement Board, the DfE lifted the Improvement Notice from Kent County Council in December 2013 with immediate effect. It is an encouraging step towards Kent achieving its' aim of being "outstanding", providing the very best possible service for children most in need in Kent.

Children's (Social Care) Transformation's focus on continued service improvement (Phase Four of the Improvement Programme) necessarily lacks some of the earlier, more prescriptive elements of previous plans and is focussed more on the delivery of quality and effective interventions. This work is now increasingly about improving the levels of consistency, quality and effectiveness of social work provision across the county. Measures continue to be employed to improve the quality of practice, including via the County Audit Programme.

Phase 4 of the Improvement work has been agreed, built around the Social Work Contract. It pulls together a number of key work-streams (quality of supervision, ICT replacement, learning and development, recruitment and retention). The Social Work Contract is a set of practice standards that covers the core social work activities. It sets out against each activity the standards that are required and that our best practitioners are routinely attaining.

This contract sets out both what is expected of our practitioners and what support and provision the organisation will put in place to support them. It builds on the outcome of Munro's review into child protection and in particular echoes the central importance of building relationships as the key vehicle to helping families change.

Views and feedback of looked after children

The Council has a number of ways of collecting feedback from young people in the care of the council. This information is used to improve the services we provide.

Feedback is collected both formally and informally. Formal mechanisms include surveys run by the Independent Review Officer service and also the Virtual School (e-PEP Survey). More informal feedback mechanisms include the opportunity to provide feedback at activity days and through Kent's Children in Care Council, as well as discussions with their social worker.

Work is underway to develop new and better ways of gathering feedback from children in care to ensure the information collected provides maximum value in helping to drive improvements in the services provided. As part of this work the Young Lives Foundation were commissioned to work with young people to establish their priorities which has been used to develop a draft questionnaire. The next step will be to consider the best way in which this can be implemented.

Independent Review Officer (IRO) survey

This survey has now been in place for two years. Last year 102 children and young people provided feedback through the IRO survey. As well as collecting useful information to understand how best to communicate with young people to ensure full engagement with the review process, the survey collects some important satisfaction measures. 90% of young people responding to the survey said they felt they were listened to at the review meeting with 88% agreeing with what was said at the review meeting. The previous year, a slightly different question was used and at that time 88% respondents said they felt the review took account of their wishes and feelings.

The Children's Care Monitor 2013

The Children's Care Monitor is a new national survey run by Ofsted. This survey will provide useful benchmarking for the quality of service. The survey was run during June and July 2013 and results will be available later in the year.

e-PEP Survey

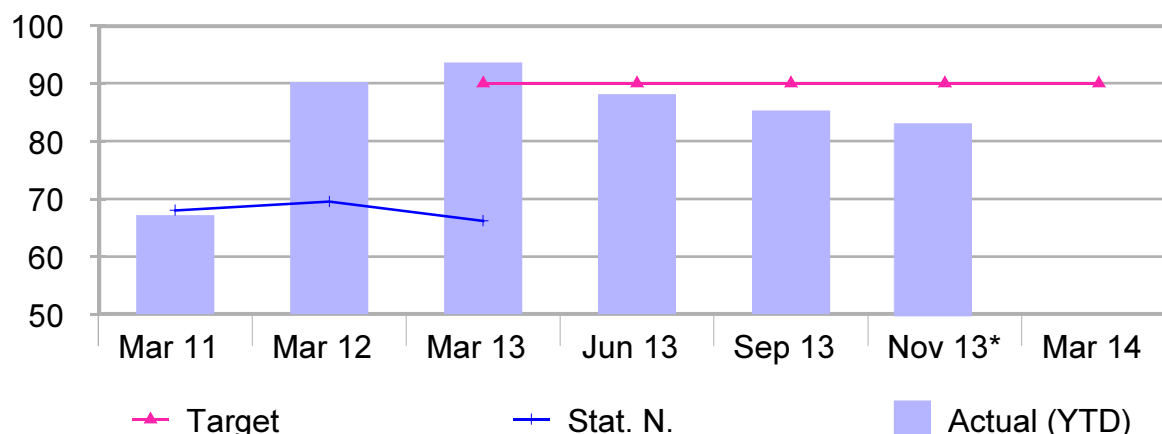
The e-PEP survey is a new survey put in place in September 2012 and collects feedback in relation to education. For the first six months of the survey, most respondents felt they are treated the same as other children (64%) and expected to achieve the same as everyone else (69%). This shows that about 1 in 3 children felt they were treated differently, although the fuller analysis shows this is something that happens sometimes rather than always. The majority of respondents (91%) felt that there was a teacher or member of staff they found it easy to talk to if they had problems. Improvements are now being made to the e-PEP survey questions to make it more useful for the future.

Activity Days

Informal feedback from children in care through activity days in the last year revealed that although children found the experience of entering care to be frightening, they frequently felt settled and safe in a short space of time and had a positive view of their experience in care. However, they identified the need for better communication with them about what was happening.

Percentage of initial assessments completed within 10 days

Amber



Trend Data – year to date	Previous Years			Current Year			
	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Jun 13	Sep 13	Nov 13	Mar 14
Actual	67.1%	90.1%	93.5%	88.0%	85.2%	83.3%*	
Target			90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
RAG Rating			Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	
Stat. N.	68%	69.5%	66.2%				

Commentary

Although performance has decreased during the year, Kent's performance remains above the England rate (75.5%), and that of Statistical Neighbours (66.2%). Kent was ranked 13 out of 152 Local Authorities in the latest published statistics (2012/13).

With the implementation of a new IT system, Specialist Children's Services have moved away from using Initial and Core Assessments and from the 15th November, 2013 commenced the use of a single assessment process.

Data Notes

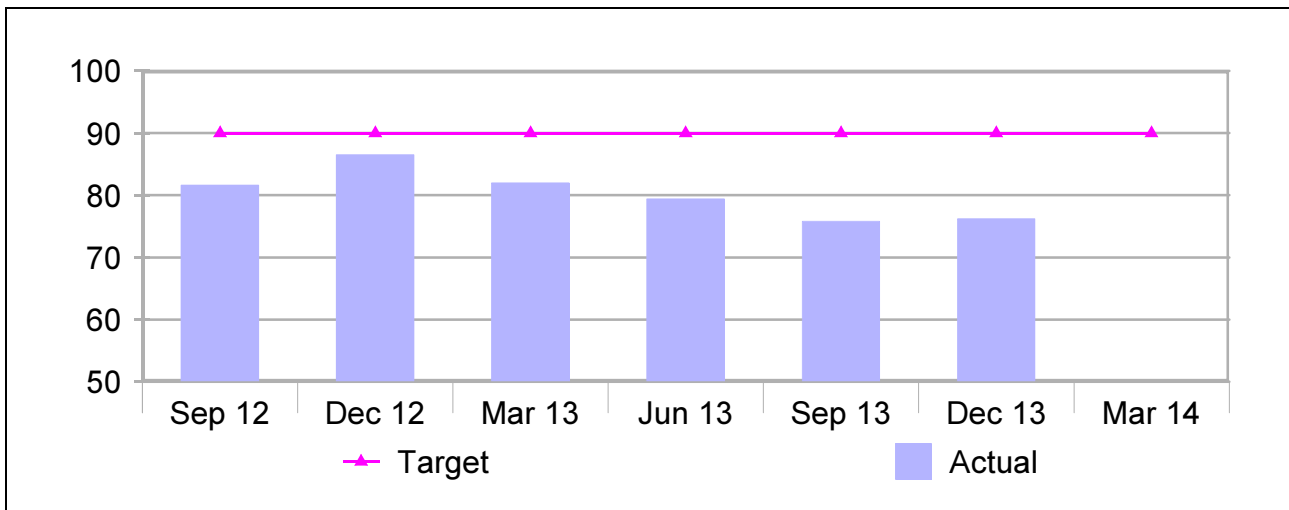
Tolerance: Higher values are better.

Results are reported as year to date. * Please note the November 2013 figure has been provided against unvalidated data due to the diversion of resources to the implementation of Liberi. The last validated data for this measure is as at September 2013.

Data Source: ICS.

Percentage of caseholding posts filled by permanent qualified social workers

RED
↑



Trend Data – quarter end	Previous Year			Current Year			
	Sep 12	Dec 12	Mar 13	Jun 13	Sep 13	Dec 13	Mar 14
Actual	81.6%	86.5%	82.0%	79.4%	75.8%	76.2%	
Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
RAG Rating	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red	Red	Red	
Agency	12.9%	13.9%	15.0%	17.2%	19.7%	20.6%	

Commentary

Please note change in RAG Levels – see data notes below.

Newly qualified social workers have taken up posts between September and January and will in due course become full case holding members of staff. In their first year they have a protected case load and increased supervision. Agency staff continue to be used to ensure average caseloads per social worker remain at comfortable levels.

Continuing efforts to attract staff include a refreshed branding and recruitment campaign, access to additional incentives for accommodation and a focus on the professional development and practice improvement that social workers value. Specific districts have greater difficulty in attracting staff for reasons connected to location, cost of housing and travel time/costs. Additional market premium payments have been introduced for newly recruited Team Managers. Recruitment of social workers from overseas continues to be actively pursued.

Data Notes

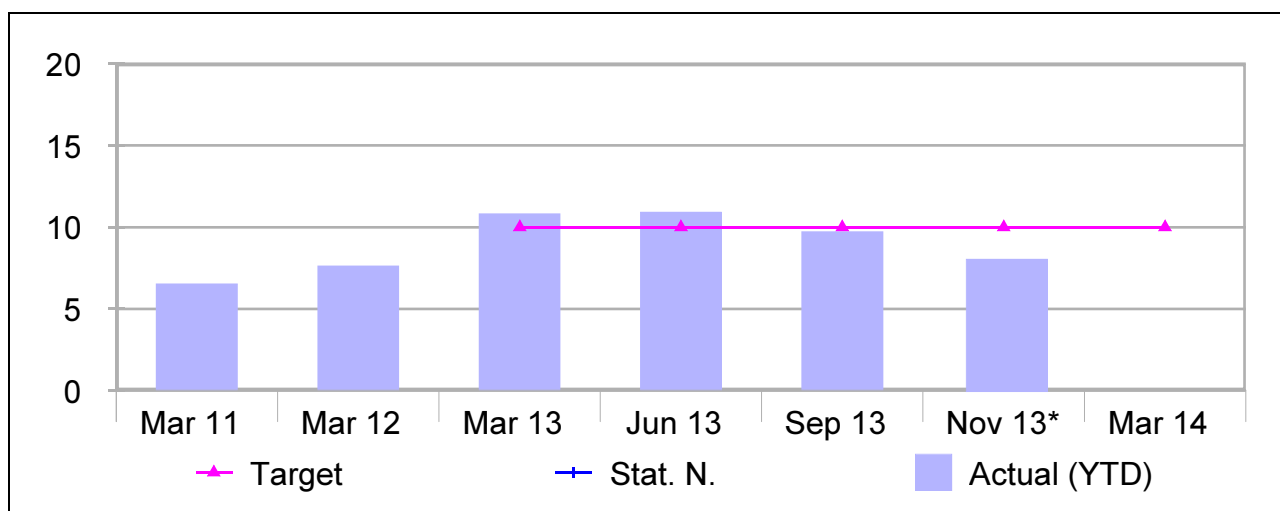
Change to the RAG rating: For 2013/14 the Amber RAG rating has been removed, a Green Rating will only be achieved once the 90% target is achieved or exceeded.

Tolerance: Higher values are better. Data is reported as the position at quarter end. Posts held by agency staff are not included within this measure.

Data Source: SCS Weekly Performance Report.

Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time

Green
↑



Trend Data – year to date	Previous Years			Current Year			
	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Jun 13	Sep 13	Nov 13	Mar 14
Actual	6.5%	7.6%	10.8%	10.9%	9.7%	8.2%*	
Target			10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
RAG Rating			Amber	Amber	Green	Green	
Stat. N.							

Commentary

Please note change of definition – see data notes below.

Performance for the year-to-date remains ahead of the target. During this period 1522 children became subject to a Child Protection Plan and 125 had been subject to a previous plan within 24 months.

Cases where children become subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time are reviewed carefully by District Management Teams and the Safeguarding Unit.

The definition for this performance measure has changed nationally for 2013/14 and national comparative data is not yet available. All performance figures provided above for previous years are reflective of the change in definition.

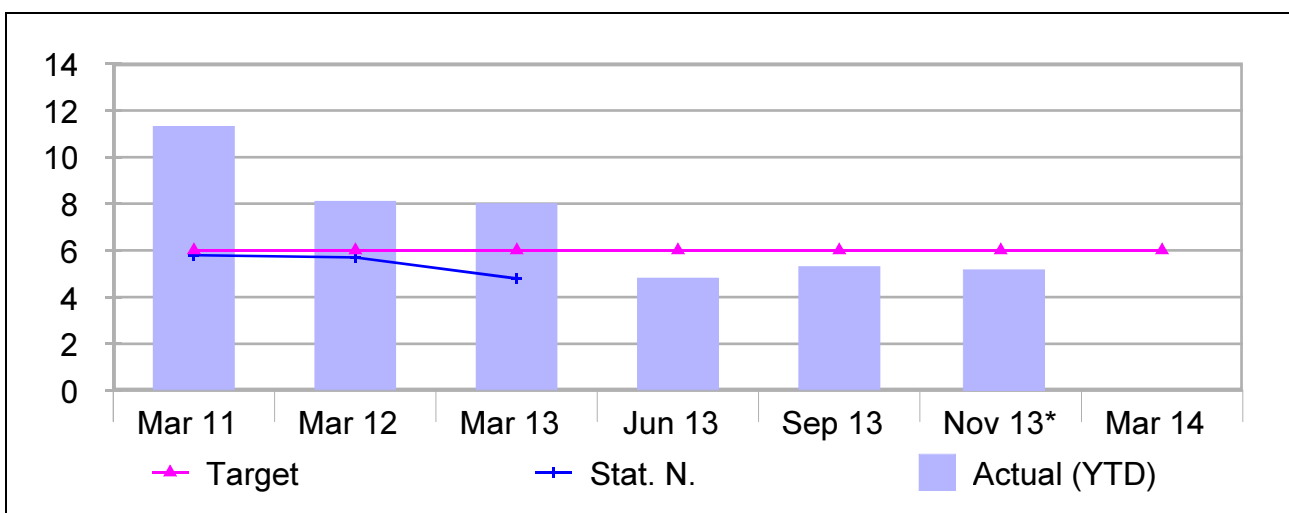
Data Notes

Change in definition: For 2013/14 this indicator now only measures children being subject to a second plan within 24 months of a previous plan.

Tolerance: As close to target as possible. Should not be too low or too high.

Data Source: ICS. * Please note the November 2013 figure has been provided against unvalidated data due to the diversion of resources to the implementation of Liberi. The last validated data for this measure is as at September 2013.

Percentage of children subject to a child protection plan for two or more years at the point of de-registration Green
↓



Trend Data – year to date	Previous Years			Current Year			
	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Jun 13	Sep 13	Nov 13	Mar 14
Actual	11.3%	8.1%	8.0%	4.8%	5.3%	5.4%*	
Target	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
RAG Rating	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green	Green	
Stat. N.	5.8%	5.7%	4.8%				

Commentary

Performance against this measure has exceeded the target set and shown a significant improvement on previous results.

This improvement has been achieved by a focus on improvements in chairing and decision-making at Child Protection conferences, on more focussed child protection plans and interventions and more consistent use of step-down to children in need and step-up to children in care, alongside regular and consistent management attention.

There has also been a focus of attention for children whose Plans reach the 18 months point with clear planning put in place at this point.

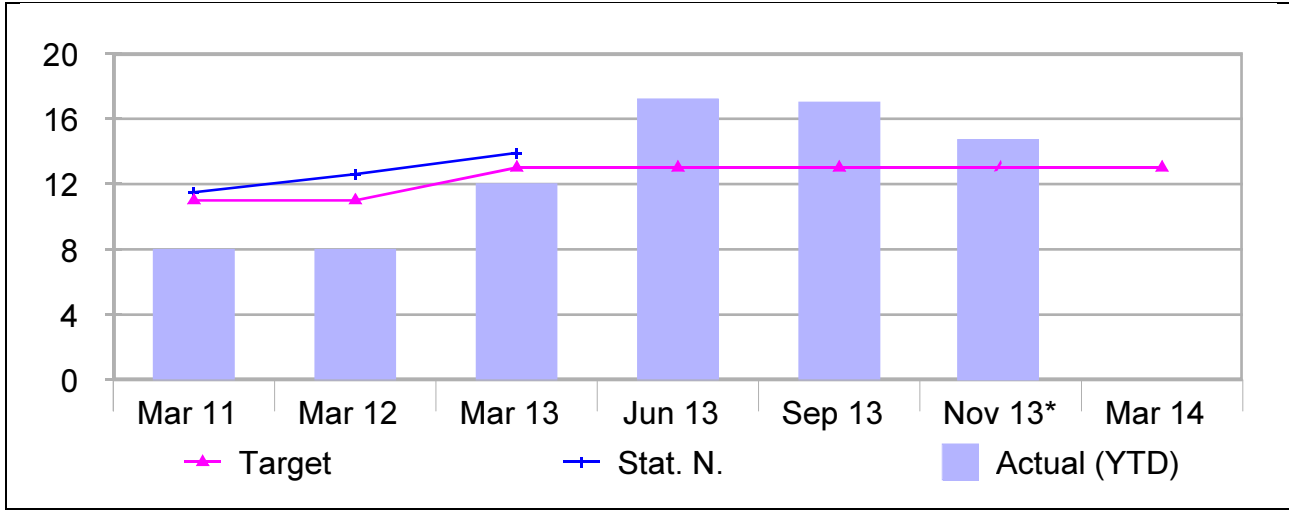
Data Notes

Tolerance: Lower values are better.

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.

Data Source: ICS. * Please note the November 2013 figure has been provided against unvalidated data due to the diversion of resources to the implementation of Liberi. The last validated data for this measure is as at September 2013.

Percentage of children leaving care who are adopted Green
↓



Trend Data – year to date	Previous Years			Current Year			
	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Jun 13	Sep 13	Nov 13	Mar 14
Actual	8.0%	8.0%	12.0%	17.2%	17.0%	15.3%*	
Target	11%	11%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
RAG Rating	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green	Green	
Stat. N.	11.5%	12.6%	13.9%				

Commentary

Significant progress has been made with regard to Adoptions and this is reflected in the year-to-date performance figures for this measure. From April – November 2013 there were 93 adoptions, compared with 69 for the same period in the previous year.

The improvements in the number of adoptions have been achieved by more focused work with prospective adopters, close working with the judiciary to reduce delays, robust case work management focused on reducing planning drift, and timely decision making in relation to planning for permanence.

It is unlikely that performance levels from the early part of the year would be sustained but on average over the year the Target level should be achieved.

Data Notes

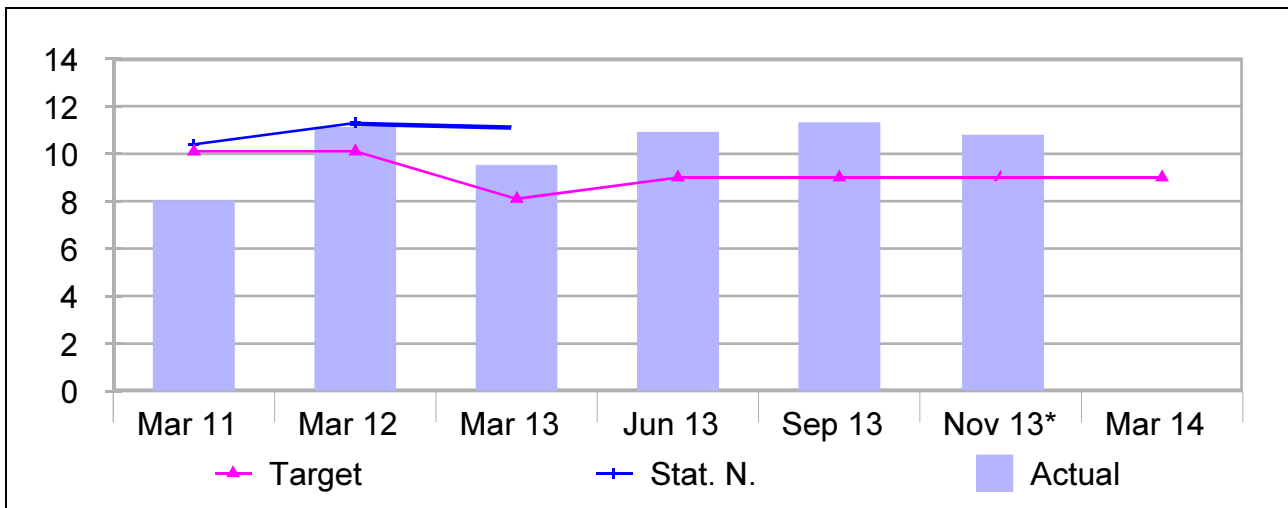
Tolerance: Higher values are better.

Data is reported as financial year to date.

Data Source: ICS. * Please note the November 2013 figure has been provided against unvalidated data due to the diversion of resources to the implementation of Liberi. The last validated data for this measure is as at September 2013.

Children in Care with 3 or more placements in the last 12 months

Amber



Trend Data – quarter end	Previous Years			Current Year			
	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Jun 13	Sep 13	Nov 13	Mar 14
Actual	8.0%	11.1%	9.5%	10.9%	11.3%	10.5%*	
Target	10.1%	10.1%	8.1%	9%	9%	9%	9%
RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	
Stat. N.	10.4%	11.3%	11.0%				

Commentary

As at November 2013, 196 children had had three or more placement moves in the previous 12 months.

From April 2011 episodes where children in care go missing have been included within the published figures for placement stability. This information is included at the end of the reporting year but due to issues with the previous IT system could not be included in the year to date performance figures. The figures for June and November 2013 therefore relate to changes in actual placements and do not include breaks in placements when a child is missing.

Data Notes

Tolerance: Lower values are better.

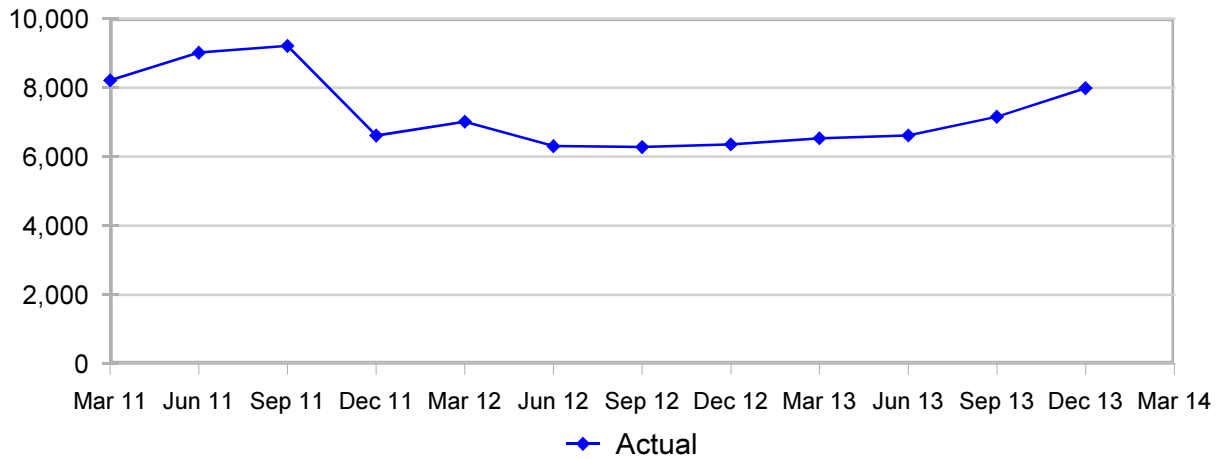
Data is reported as a snapshot at each quarter end.

Data Source: ICS. * Please note the November 2013 figure has been provided against unvalidated data due to the diversion of resources to the implementation of Liberi. The last validated data for this measure is as at September 2013.

Specialist Children's Services - Lead indicators

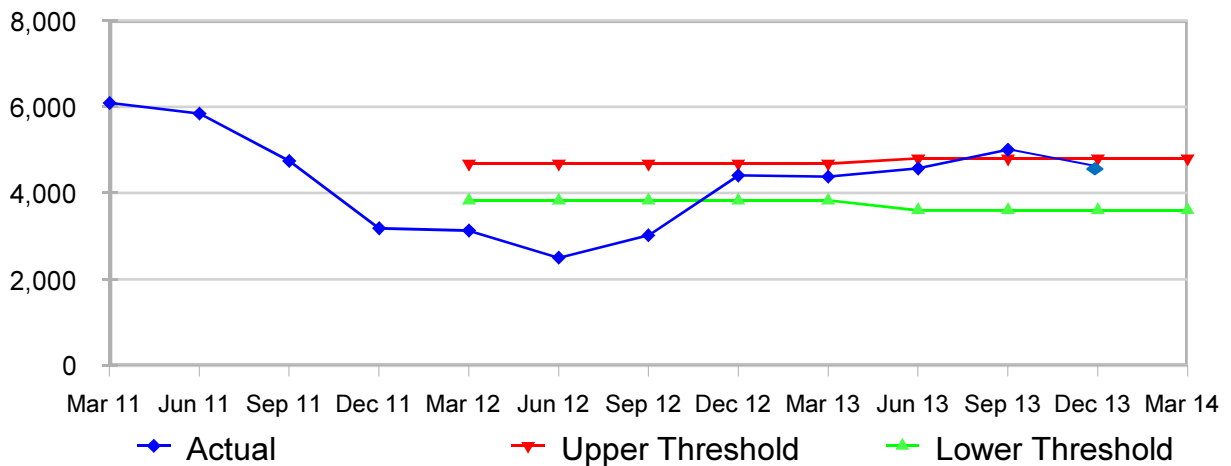
The **number of contacts** to the service has seen an increase since June 2013.

Quarterly number of contacts received



The number of referrals has reduced in the quarter and is now within the expected range. The reduction in referral numbers in 2011 can be attributed to the introduction of the Central Duty Team. This resulted in a high level of work being conducted at the initial contact stage, without being recorded as a referral. A revised process was introduced in August 2012 to ensure such contacts were recorded as referrals. Following the introduction of the new arrangements, the recorded referral rate increased to within the expected range.

Quarterly number of referrals



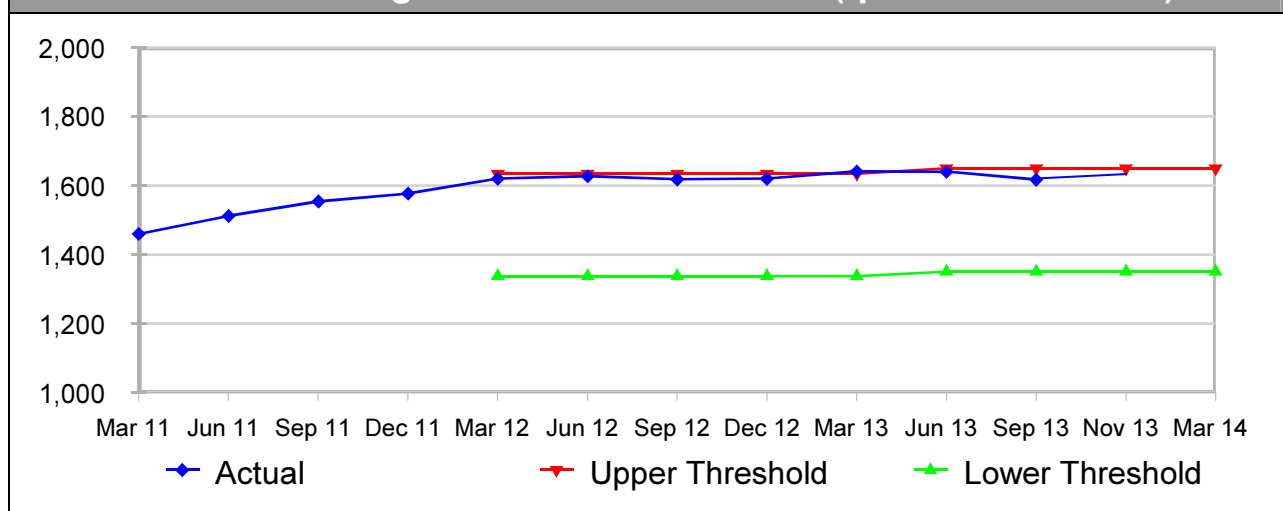
Specialist Children's Services - Lead indicators

The **number of indigenous Children in Care** has remained fairly static over the last year. The rate per 10,000 children aged 0 - 17 years at the end of November 2013 was 57.8, against the target rate of 48.5.

Actions being taken which will impact on the number of Children in Care include:

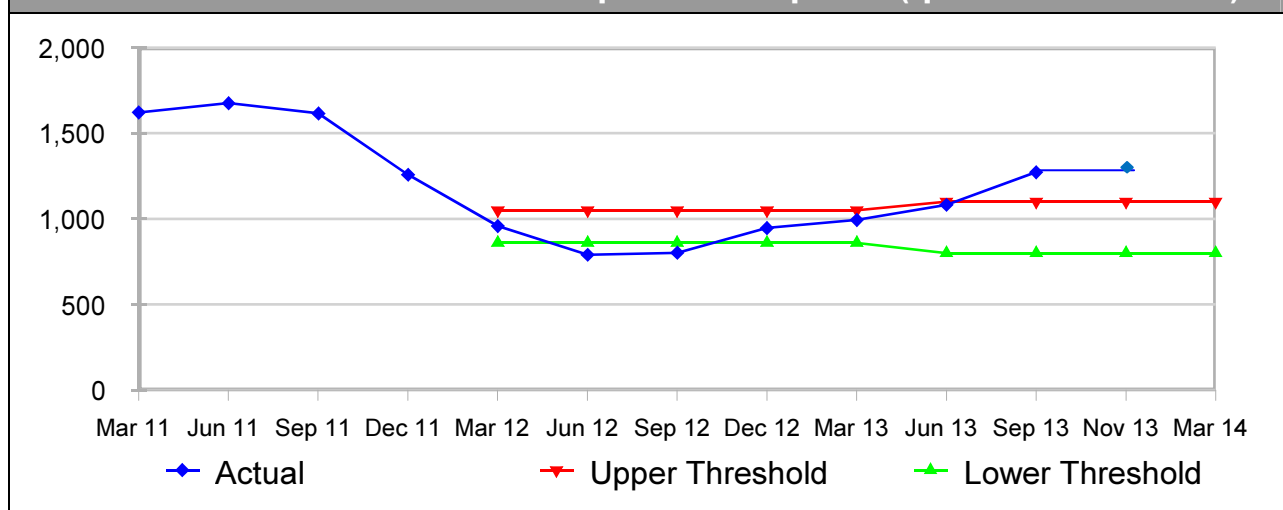
- Improving the percentage of children who are adopted.
- Robust gate-keeping of decisions to take Children in Care.
- Robust tracking of permanency planning including tackling drift and delay.
- Increased investment in prevention and early intervention services.
- Developing speedier and integrated responses to vulnerable adolescents.

Number of indigenous Children in Care (quarter-end count)



The number of **children with Child Protection Plans** at the end of November 2013 was 1282. The indicative target, based on a comparable level with statistical neighbours, is a rate of 34.9 per 10,000 children aged 0 - 17 years. Kent's rate at the end of November 2013 was 39.4.

Number of children with child protection plans (quarter-end count)



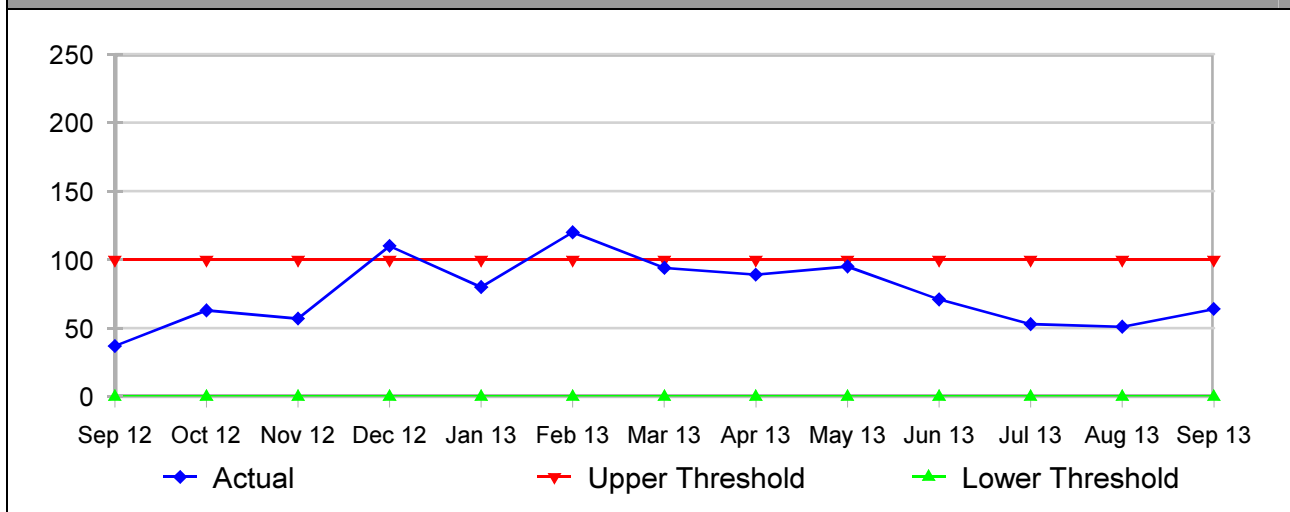
Number of children with child protection plans (quarter-end count)

Specialist Children's Services - Lead indicators

Data for the measures of timeliness of Initial and Core Assessments is not available for the third quarter. The figures provided below are therefore for September 2013. For future reporting these two measures will be replaced with one measure to cover the new single assessment which was implemented from 15th November, 2013

For September 2013 **the number of Initial assessments in progress and out of timescale** was within the expected range.

Initial assessments in progress, out of timescale (month-end count)



The number of **core assessments in progress and out of timescale** was slightly above the Upper Threshold level of 100 at the end of September 2013 with many of these cases being in East Kent. Swale in particular was experiencing issues in meeting this timeliness measure due to staffing pressures combined with high volumes of work as a result of an increased rate of referrals. Ensuring that the quality of assessments is maintained also resulted in some delays which impacted on the timeliness of core assessments.

Core assessments in progress, out of timescale (month-end count)

