

Narrative Report - CPR3 Return 2008/09

Introduction

Performance during 2008/09 should take account of the increase in referrals to Children's Social Services (CSS), the impact of ICS implementation on CSS operations, heightened concerns in respect of safeguarding and managing risk post Baby P, and vacancy levels within front line social work teams.

Kent has a strong performance on safeguarding and was rated 'Good' in the JAR evaluation undertaken in February 2008, and the subsequent APA in September 2008.

Total number of referrals received by Children's Social Services

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
11,860	10,515	12,005	17,358

Referrals received by CSS throughout 2008 have increased by 44.6% on the previous year. Anecdotally, District Duty Teams have reported a significant increase in referrals since the Baby 'P' case came to the attention of the media in late 2008 however the data indicates an even distribution of referrals through out the year.

Caution needs to be exercised in respect of the 44.6% increase as 07/08 data was recorded by the SWIFT system and not all children within the family were recorded as a referral necessarily. ICS went live in April 08/09 and all children within a family must be recorded as a referral. Therefore while it is possible to say there has been an increase in referrals it is not possible with any degree of accuracy to say by how much. However the County Duty Service has reported an increase in referrals by child 35% and nationally, other Local Authorities are reporting increases in the region of 30 – 35%.

The increase in referrals is not attributable to the introduction of the CAF in Kent. It is not possible to identify if there has been an impact from the development of the Local Children Services Partnerships and Children's Centres as the data counts referrals by referring agency.

Overall, the percentage of the total number of referrals to CSS from each individual agency has not changed significantly from the previous year; most agencies having increased their numbers of referrals to CSS. The largest number of referrals are received from the Police, 2985 referrals in 2007/08, in comparison to 5150 in the year 2008/09. Police referrals made up 30.2% of the total number of referrals for 2008/09 and 28.1% in 07/08.

46.4% of all referrals were classified as 'Family Dysfunction' and 23.1% as Abuse and Neglect.

NI68: Referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	National Average 2007/08	Statistical Neighbours 2007/08	2008/09
94.5% (11,210)	74.8% (7,865)	64.2% (7,710)	59.4%	59.1%	47.5% (8,241)

The number of referrals going on to initial assessment as percentage of the total number of referrals has dropped from 64% to 47.5% however this drop in performance should take account of the fact that the total number of referrals has increased by 44.6%. In real terms more initial assessments were completed in 2008/9 - 8,241 during 2008/9 compared to 7,710 in 2007/08. This equates to 531 additional initial assessments completed during the previous year.

The fact that less than half of referrals received by Duty Teams led to initial assessment (a high proportion of referrals being screened out), is an issue which requires further investigation as it does raise a question regarding the appropriateness of referrals being received.

NI59: Initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 7 days of referral

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	National Average 2007/08	Statistical Neighbours 2007/08	2008/09
66.8% (7,485)	75.3% (5,925)	76.9% (5,930)	70.7%	70.2%	71.7% (5,911)

Performance in relation to initial assessment being completed within 7 days has dropped 5.2% over the previous year. This represents 19 fewer initial assessments being completed during 2008 as in real terms more initial assessments were completed in total. This performance is still slightly favourable in comparison to our statistical neighbours and the average across England.

NI60: Core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	National Average 2007/08	Statistical Neighbours 2007/08	2008/09
70% (1,475)	84% (2,820)	84% (3,370)	80%	79%	81.2% (3,423)

Performance in respect of core assessments completed within 35 working days remains strong at 81.2% for 2008/09. This is a small drop in performance (3.8%) on the previous year, but should be considered in the context of a small increase in completion of core

assessments in real terms from 4,000 to 4,215, as well as the significant increase in referral activity.

NI64: Child Protection Plans lasting 2 years or more

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	National Average 2007/08	Statistical Neighbours 2007/08	2008/09
7.6% (65)	5.5% (45)	8.2% (65)	5.3%	5.3%	10% (86)

There has been a 1.8% increase in Child Protection Plans lasting 2 years or more. This drop in performance was anticipated due to management action taken prior to the JAR in 2007 to improve performance in respect of the NI65 indicator (children becoming subject to a Child Protection plan second or subsequent time). At this time, concerns were identified because this indicator had dropped a band (at 19.2%). Analysis work established that some Child Protection Plans were being ended prematurely and an over optimistic view taken of the child's circumstances. Practice in this area was strengthened. It is now expected that all conferences where consideration is being given to ending the Plan, must have an updated core assessment which demonstrates measurable improvements.

NI65: Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	National Average 2007/08	Statistical Neighbours 2007/08	2008/09
14.2%	19.7%	19.2%	13.6%	14.7%	15.1%

During 2008/09, there was a reduction in the number of children becoming subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time to 15.1%. This upward trend was anticipated and is a significant improvement in performance which, as hypothesised above, may correlate with the management action taken in 2007, linked to preventing premature de-registration.

NI67: Child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	National Average 2007/08	Statistical Neighbours 2007/08	2008/09
100%	98.4%	100%	99.4%	99.5%	99.3%

Performance in this area remains strong. The dip from 100% represents 6 children, 2 families. In total, the number of children needing to be reviewed who are subject to a Child Protection Plan has increased year on year. In 2005/06 there were 500 children, in 2006/07 there were 620 children, in 2007/08 780 children subject to a CP Plan and in 2008/09 there were 860 children in this category. Again this represents a year on year increase in activity, whilst strong performance has been maintained.

PAF banding
Very good
Good
Acceptable
Ask questions about performance
Investigate urgently

Banding for 2008/09 is not currently available