

Children and Families Monthly Report - October 2015

Summary

In the recent months, various data cleansing projects and workshops have taken place within the Children's Safeguarding services – including new regular reports (e.g. missing children from end of June onwards), workshops (which started at the end of July) and ongoing data quality work on the recording of child sexual exploitation (CSE). These all appear to have had a positive effect on the timeliness and accuracy of recording - when looking at the qualitative measures, for example, there are only four measures where there has been a negative change compared either to the previous month, or the same period in the previous year. The rest of the figures show either a positive development of over 10%, or no significant difference which in some cases could signify stabilisation of performance levels.

At the same time, however, data quality checks on certain measures, particularly the number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) held (CP2) and ICPCs held within timescales (CP3) have shown that more attention still needs to be paid on events being recorded in a timely manner.

There has been a negative decrease on the number of Single Assessments completed within 45 working days when compared both to the previous month and the same period last year. Over the last three months, both the percentage and number of SAs completed within timescale have reduced significantly compared to the three-month period of April-June 2015. At the same time, the total number of Single Assessments completed has continued to decrease month on month, except for a few peaks over the 12-month period.

The number of children open to the authority who have been missing at any point during the month has seen a negative decrease compared to September. The reason for the increase, at least partially, is expected to be the fact that recently, training has been given to frontline staff on how to accurately record missing children on the system. Rather than accepting this as the only reason, however, this should be taken as an opportunity to focus on those children who do go missing and some of whose missing episodes have previously gone unnoticed.

Compared to the same period in the previous year, the percentage of children subject to a Child Protection Plan seen in the last 14 calendar days has decreased significantly. Although changes month on month have remained between 57-79%, there is no predictable pattern, other than a decrease in December 2014, which could be due to it being a holiday period. However, August, which is a summer holiday term, shows the highest performance level of 79% during the last 12 months. Investigation of the reasons behind the variations should assist in discovering whether changes happen because of backdated recording of visits, or whether children subject to CP plans are not visited as should as they should be.

Positive developments include the level of Universal Help Plans (UHPs) which has reduced this month- this is expected to at least partly be due to work that was completed over the summer, including audits of Early Help cases, which identified a number of children who no longer required EH intervention.

Looking at the qualitative measures again, there were six indicators which showed a positive change compared to September - of these, two were Child Protection and two Looked after Children performance measures. The percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) held within timescales, and the percentage of Looked after Children leaving care for permanence were two measures which improved both compared to the previous month and the October 2014. Improvements from the same period last year were also primarily in the CP and LAC performance areas.

N.B. CP4 - Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) resulting in a Child Protection Plan has not been included in this analysis as the significant change compared to the previous month is due to an exceptional figure of 100% in September 2015 and conclusions based on this would be misleading.

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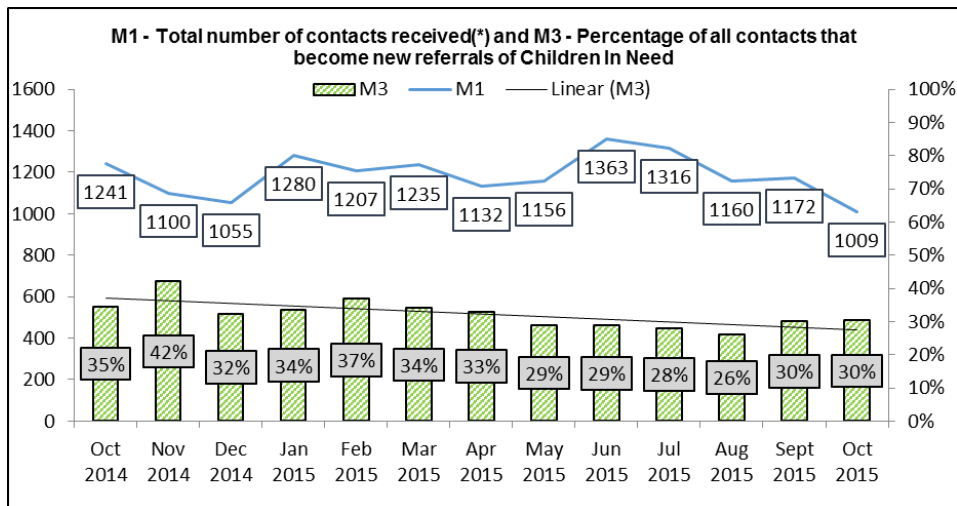
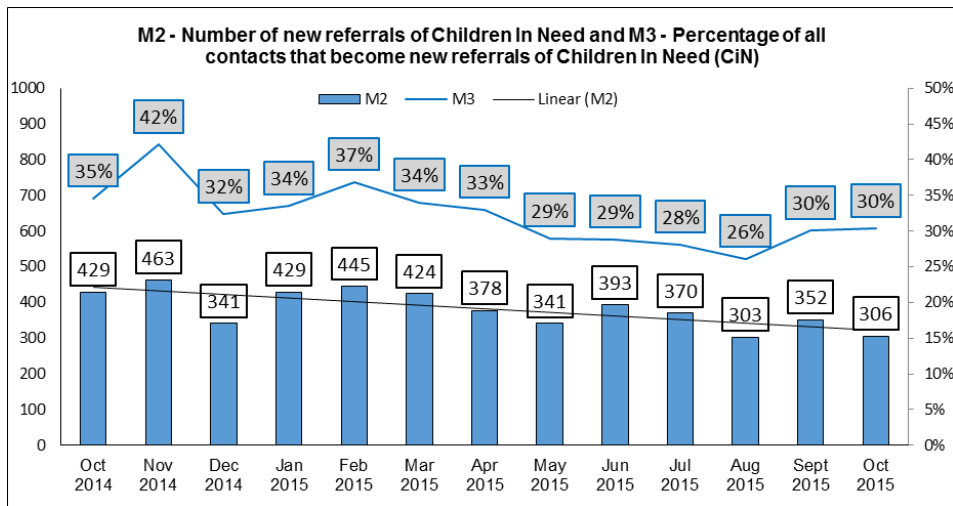
Quantitative measures: significant changes (+/-10%)

MASH and Children in Need (CiN)

M1 - Number of contacts received (includes contacts that become referrals), M2 - Number of new referrals of Children In Need (CiN) and M3 - Percentage of all contacts that become new referrals of Children In Need (CiN)

The number of contacts received has decreased by 14% compared to the previous month, and 19% compared to the same period last year. Similarly, the number of new CiN referrals has decreased not only compared to the previous month but also month on month over the 12 month period (excluding lower numbers in December 2014 and August 2015, which may be attributable to them being holiday seasons).

The percentage of all contacts that become new CiN referrals (presented in the second graph below) has remained remarkably stable over the 12-month period (except for a higher percentage in November 2014) - however, there has been a 12% decrease compared to the same period last year. At 30%, October's figure is close to the 12-month average of 32%, on a moderately declining trendline.



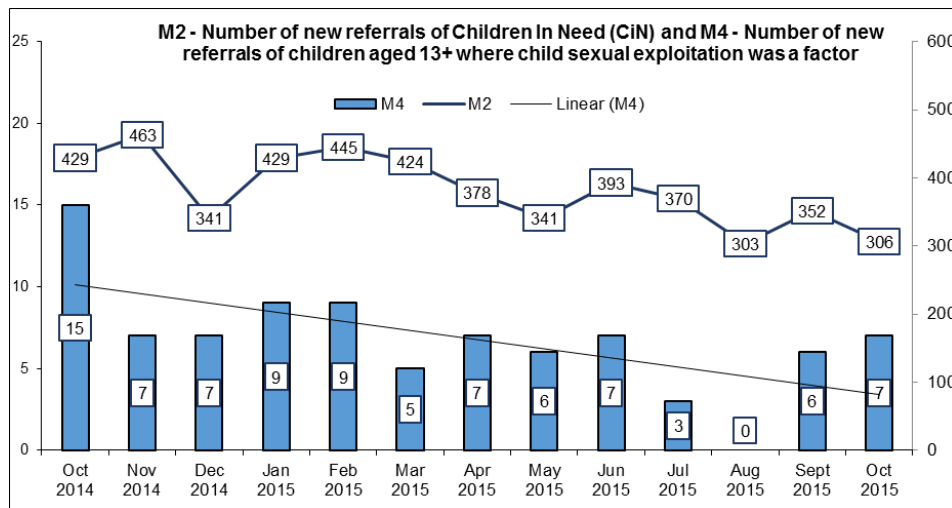
(*) M1 - Includes contacts that become referrals

M4 - Number of new referrals of children aged 13+ where child sexual exploitation was a factor

There has been an increase of 17% in this figure compared to the previous month, and a decrease of 53% compared to the same period last year. As can be seen on the graph below, there continues to be a fair amount variation month on month.

It should be noted that child sexual exploitation is recorded either as ‘at risk’, ‘vulnerable to’ and ‘subject to’, and the graph below presents the total of all three categories.

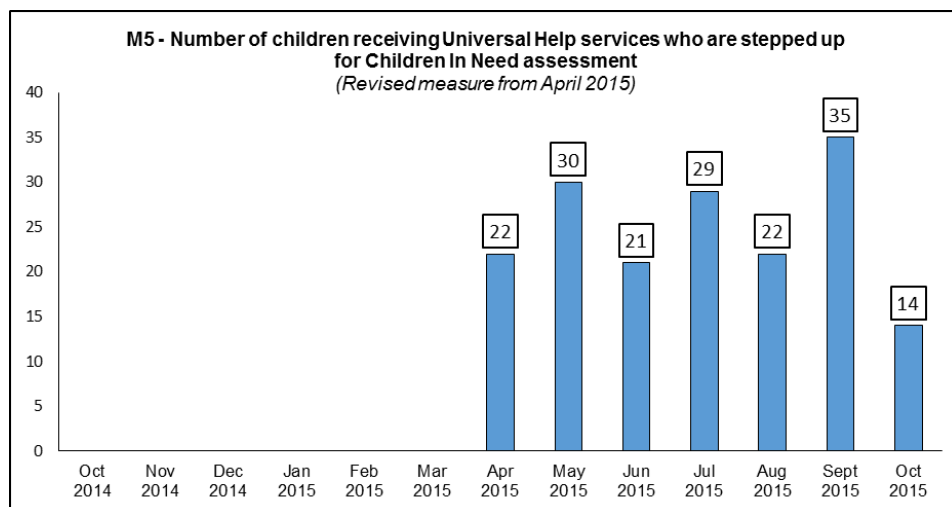
This is an area where data quality work is currently being undertaken by frontline staff, which is hoped will both raise awareness of staff and improve accuracy of reporting.



M5 - Number of children receiving Universal Help services who are stepped up for Children In Need (CiN) assessment

This indicator has only been monitored since April 2015; therefore, trend analysis is currently not viable. There have, however, been substantial changes month on month – a 60% decrease compared to the previous month, where in September, there was a 59% increase compared to August.

At 14, this figure is currently 44% below the 12 month average of 25, and presents the lowest value in the seven months since the monitoring of this measure began.

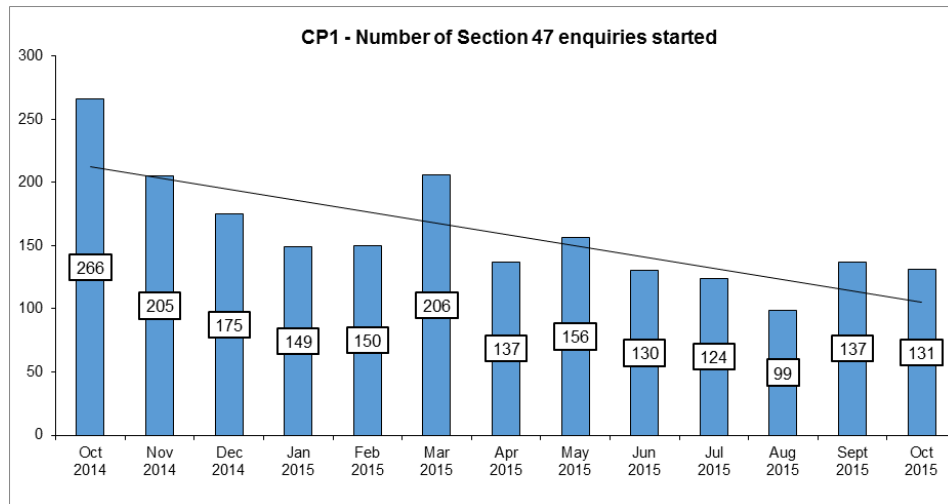


Child Protection (CP)

CP1- Number of Section 47 (S47) enquiries started

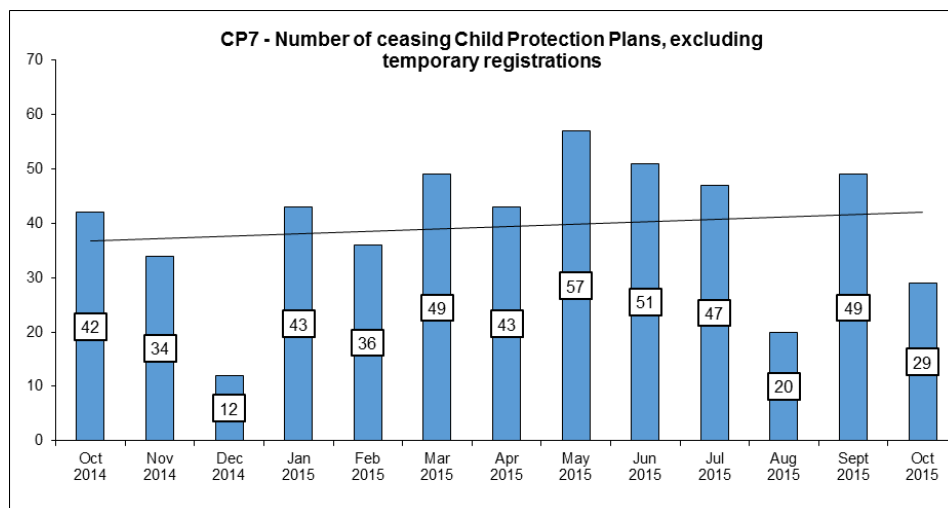
The number of Section 47 enquiries started has decreased by 51% compared to the same period in the previous year, which currently presents the largest number in the last 13 months.

It might be useful to look back at October 2014 and March 2015 to see what possible factors may have contributed to the peaks in numbers in those months (such as increased awareness of warning signs by external agencies as a result of training or campaigning, etc.)



CP7 - Number of ceasing Child Protection Plans (CPP), excluding temporary registrations

After an increase of 58% in last month, compared to September in the previous year, this figure has in October again seen a significant percentage decrease from both the previous month, and the same period last year.

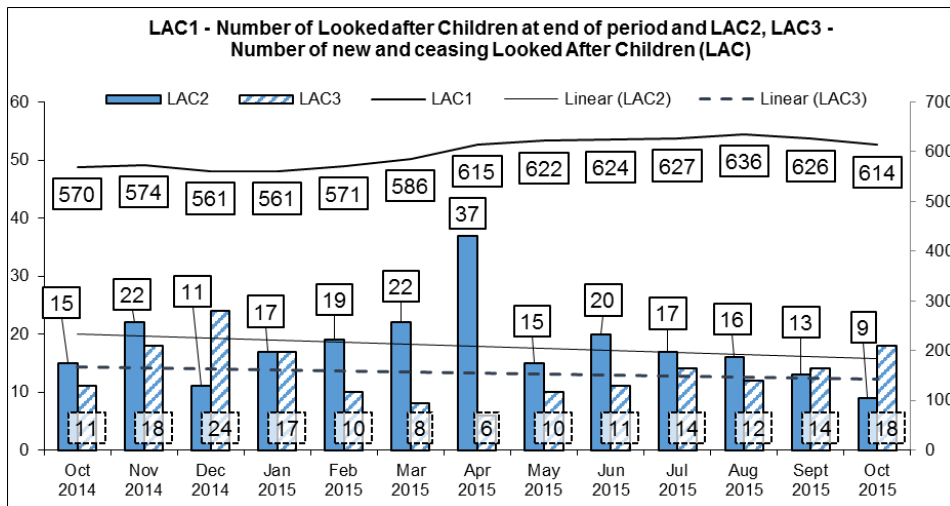
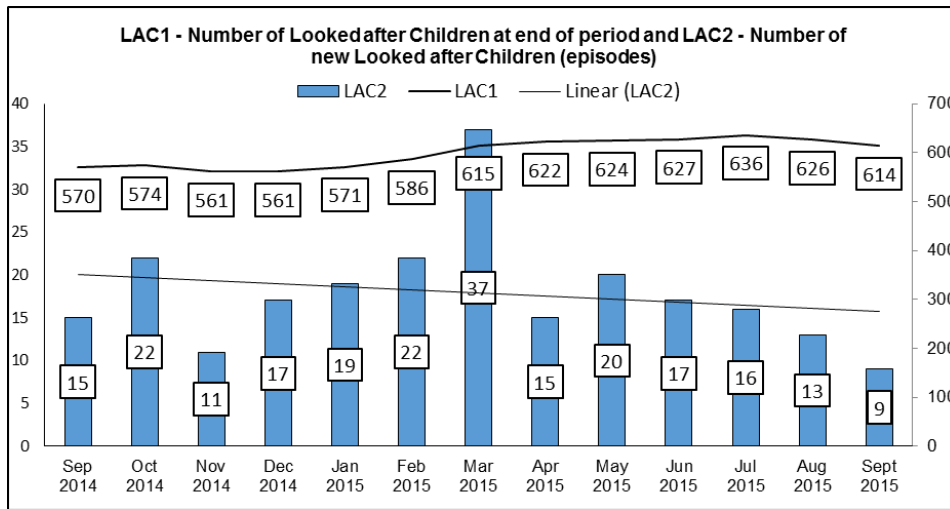


Looked after Children (LAC)

LAC2 - Number of new Looked after Children (episodes)

This indicator has decreased month on month since May 2015, and continues to do so, with October's figure down by 31% compared to the previous month, and 40% compared to the same period last year.

Numbers of Looked after Children are shown below in two graphs – which also show that the numbers of new and ceasing LAC are not accurately reflected in the total number of Looked after Children, for which reason, it may be assumed that episode of new and ceasing LAC are at times recorded subsequently. This in turn affects the accuracy of all three measures (LAC1, LAC2 and LAC3).



Qualitative measures: significant changes (+/-10%)

Positive change – **Negative change**

Assessments

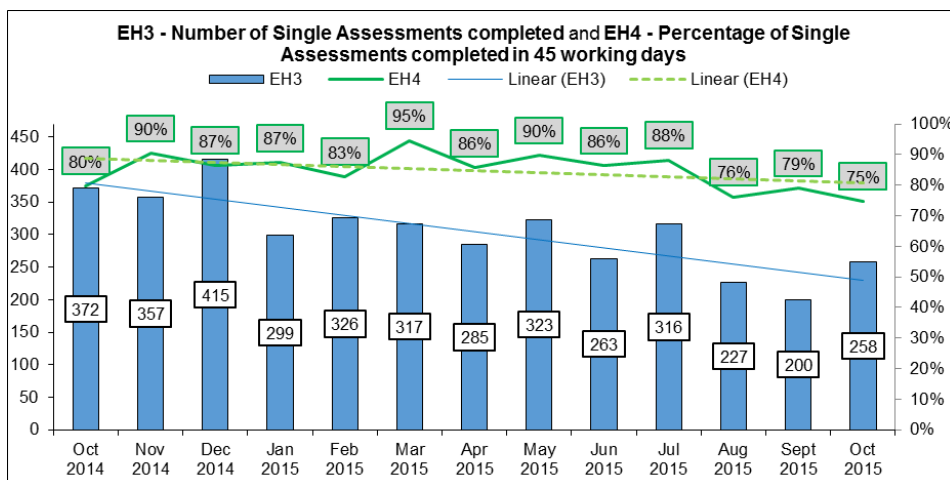
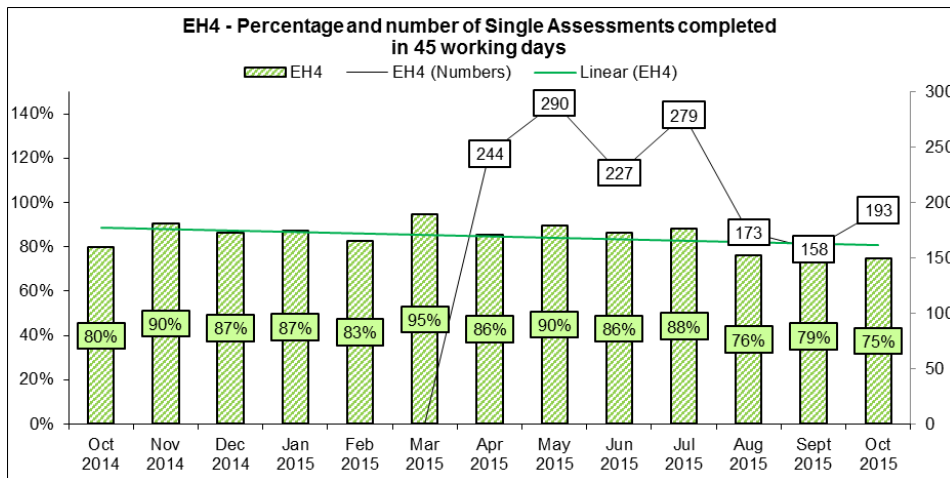
EH3 - Number of Single Assessments completed and **EH4** - Percentage and number of Single Assessments (SA) completed in 45 working days

There have not been significant changes in the percentage of SAs completed within 45 working days; however, it is included here as it has continued to decrease, despite the reduction in the total number of SAs completed.

There has been a positive percentage increase of 22% in the number of SAs completed within timescales when compared to the previous month. However, the number is now significantly below the level presented in April-July 2015; particularly May 2015 when nearly 100 more Single Assessments were completed in 45 working days.

Not enough data is available to analyse annual trends on this figure, but the graph below shows that the trend for both the total number completed, and the percentage completed within 45 working days continues to decrease.

Reasons for the decline in the percentage should be investigated to improve performance.

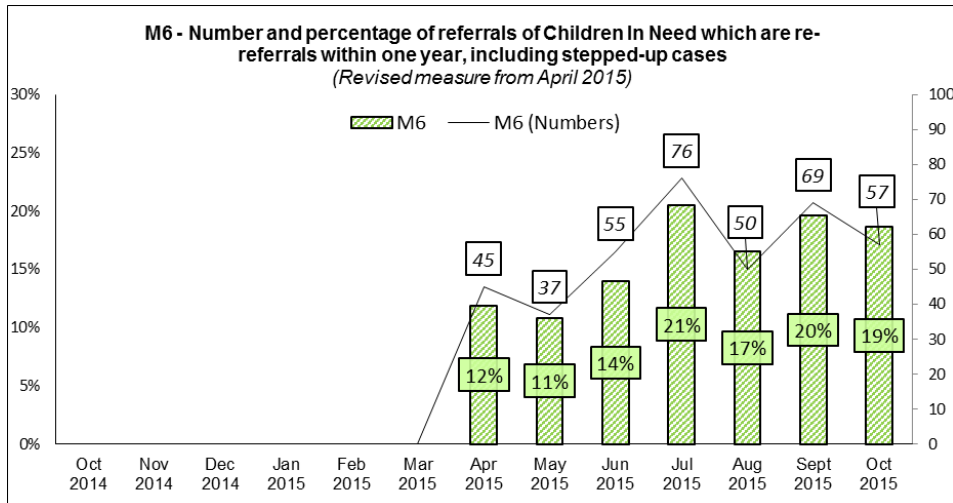


MASH and Children in Need (CiN)

M6 – Number (and percentage) of referrals of Children In Need (CiN) which are re-referrals within one year

There have not been significant changes in the percentage of re-referrals of Children in Need, but there has been a positive percentage change of 17% in the number of children who this applies to – from 69 children in the previous month to 57 in October.

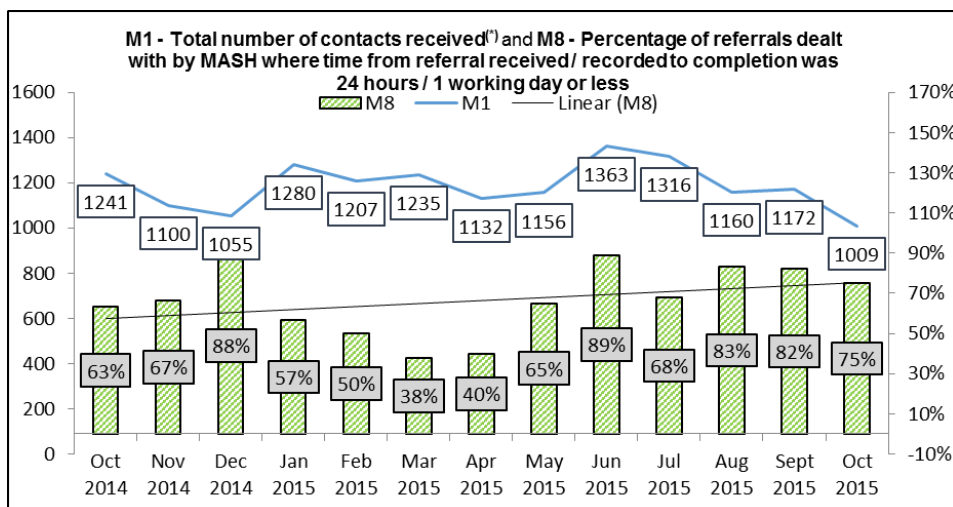
With this figure, it is useful to look at both of the percentage, and the actual numbers of children that have returned within one year. This month's figure is 25% below the 12 month top figure of 76 children (in July 2015), but still just above the 12 month average of 56.



M8 - Percentage of referrals dealt with by MASH where time from referral received / recorded to completion was 24 hours / 1 working day or less

The percentage of referrals to MASH where the time from start to completion was one working day or less has seen a positive change of 10%, from 63% in October 2014 to 75% this month. The figure is now 12% above the 12-month average of 67% - however, it should be noted that the average figure includes the exceptionally low figures of January-April 2015. The six month average for this figure, which excludes the low figures (and hence is perhaps more realistic), is 77%.

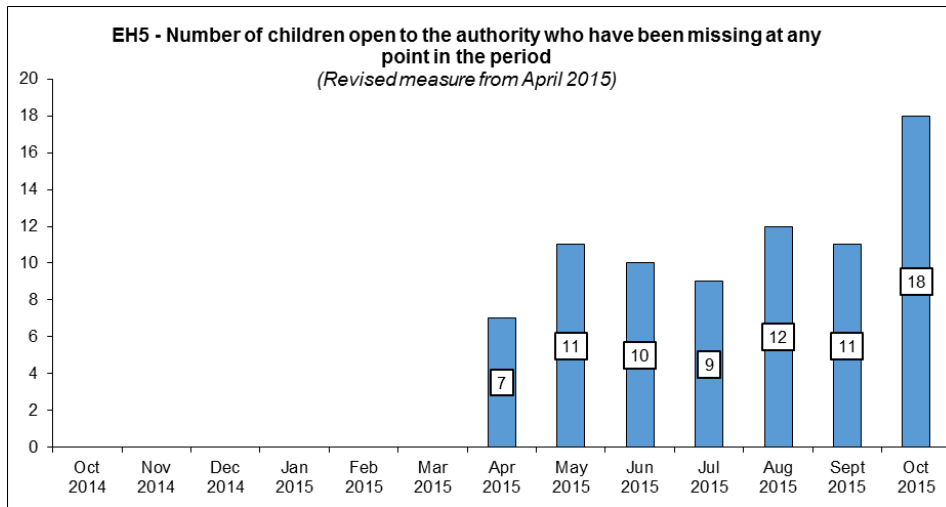
The graph below shows the indicator together with the total number of contacts received (M1), and it shows that although the number of contacts received has gone down, so has the percentage of referrals that have been deal with within one working day. Reasons behind this should be investigated to see what can be done to improve consistency of performance.



(*) M1 - Includes contacts that become referrals

EH5 - Number of children open to the authority who have been missing at any point in the period

There has been a percentage increase of 64% on this measure compared to the previous month, which is at least partially due to recent training being given to frontline staff on recording missing children on PARIS. The increase in numbers may, for that reason, indicate that in the past, some missing episodes were not recorded correctly. It is hoped that with a new regular report in place and with better awareness of the recording procedure, this indicator will give us a more accurate picture of children who go missing.

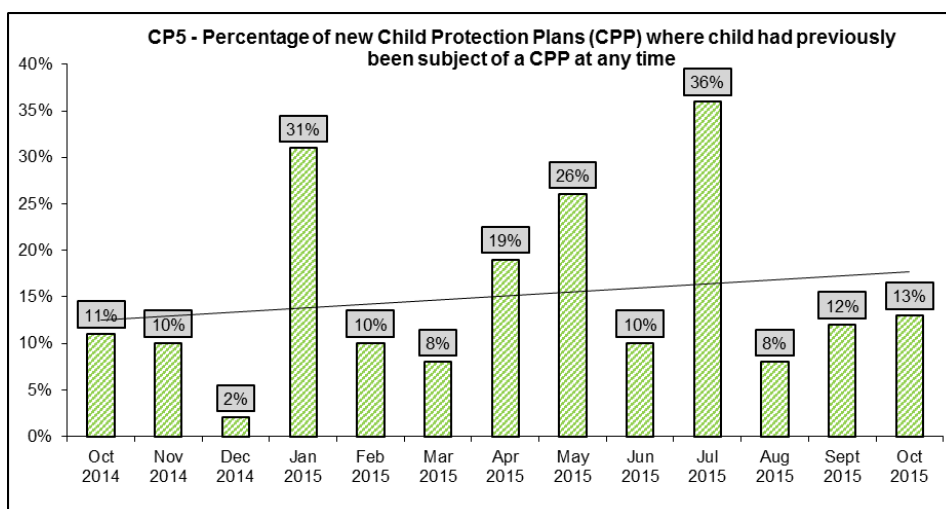


Child Protection (CP)

CP5 - Percentage of new Child Protection Plans (CPP) where child had previously been subject of a CPP at any time

There has been an 18% increase in the percentage of new Child Protection Plans (CPP) where the child has previously been subject of a plan compared to the same period last year. The numbers of repeat CP plans are low – under five in September and under ten in October – for which reason, any change in the number will affect the percentage significantly.

There is now a new quarterly report delivered to the relevant PO, which provides details of children on repeat CP plans. It is hoped this report it will assist in identifying those children and their families more quickly, and thus being able to focus on their individual needs and reasons for returning to the authority.

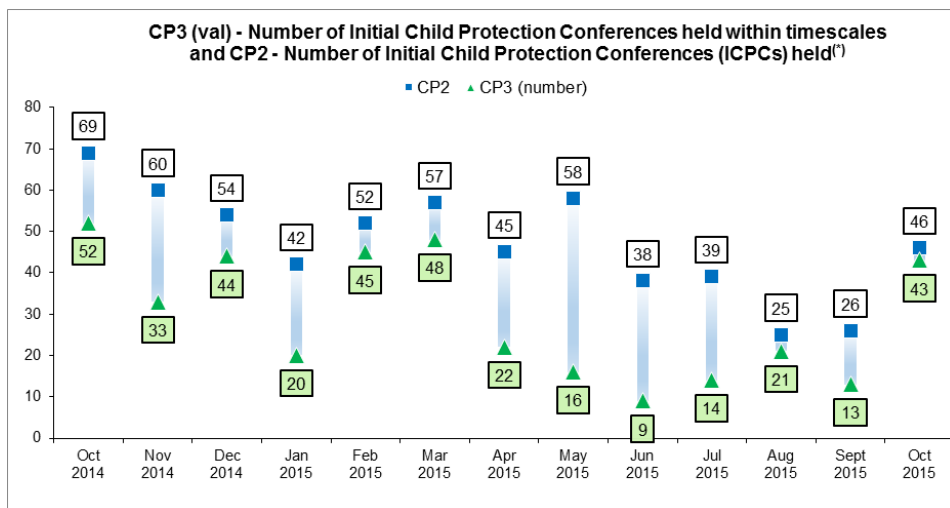
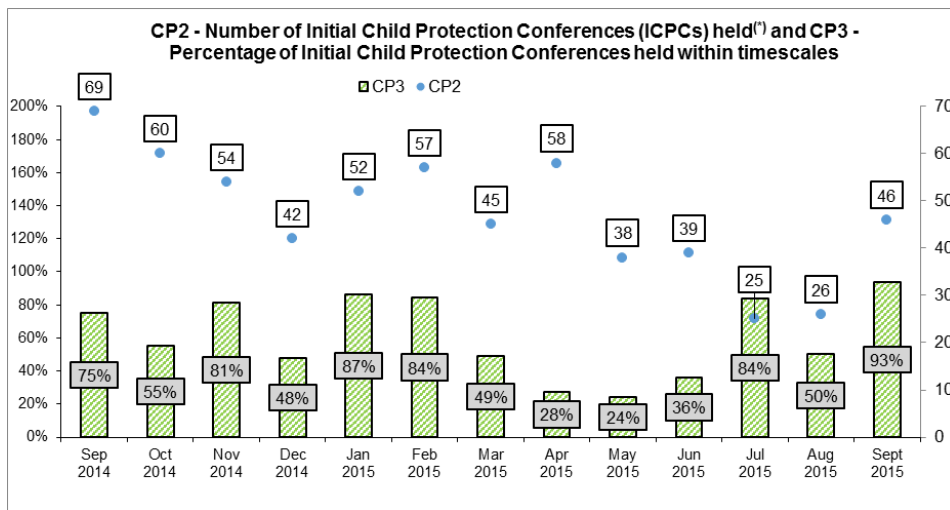


CP3 - Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) held within timescales and CP2 - Number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) held, including Transfer-Ins, excluding temporary registrations

There has been a positive percentage change of 87% in the percentage of ICPCs held within timescales when compared to the previous month, and 18% compared to the same period last year. In numbers, 43 conferences out of 46 were held within timescales, compared to 13 out of 26 conferences in September 2015 and 52 out of 69 conferences in October 2014.

This figure is now above both the Statistical Neighbour (SN) and England averages of 2014, and also presents the maximum value in the last 12 months. However, there continues to be fluctuation in the percentage, and it does not occur in unison with the numbers of initial conferences held.

The total number of initial CP conferences held sees a lot of variation month on month, with a 77% percentage increase in October compared to the previous month, and 33% decrease compared to the same period in the previous year.

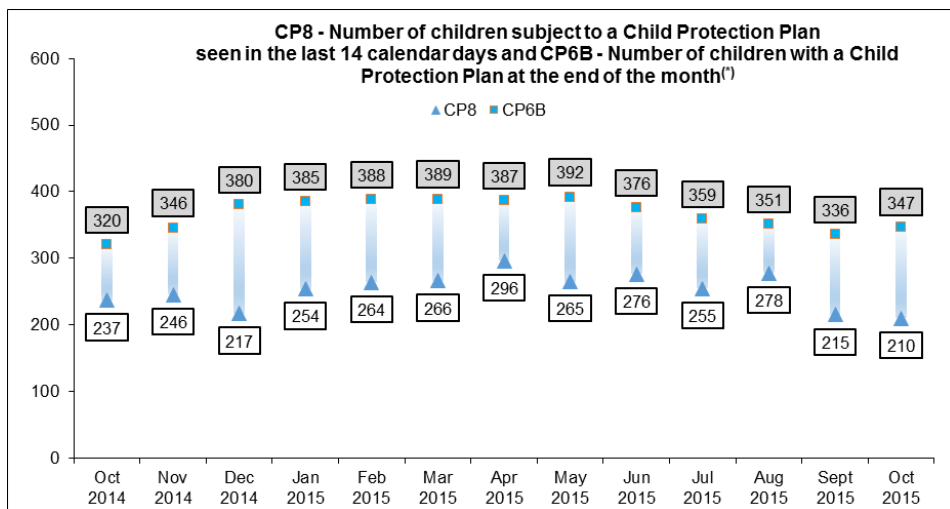
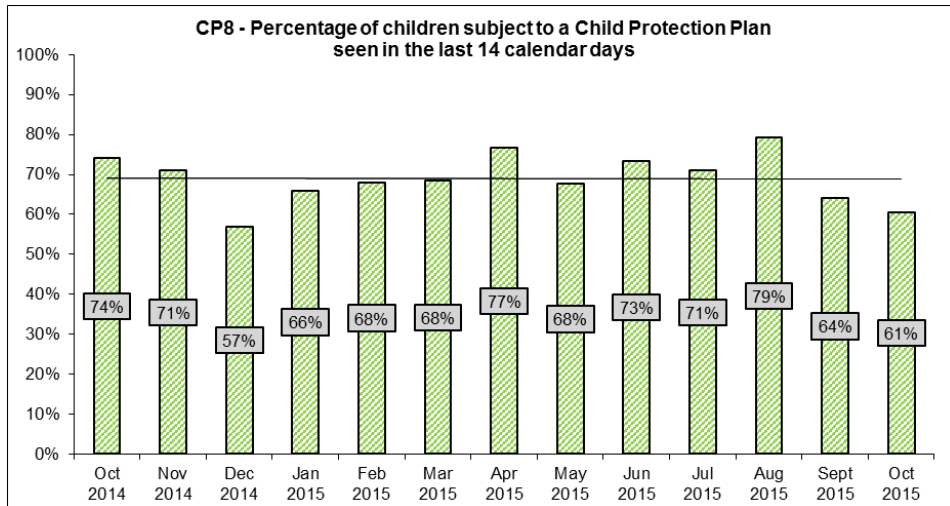


(*) CP2 - Includes transfer-Ins, excluding temporary registrations.

CP8 - Percentage of children subject to a Child Protection Plan seen in the last 14 calendar days

This figure has continued to decrease for two consecutive months, now down by 18% when compared to the same period last year, and also below the 12 month average of 69%. At 210, the number of children seen within the last 14 calendar days is also at its lowest within the last 12 months.

The second graph below shows the number of children subject to a child protection plan at the end of the month, and the number of them who have been seen in the last 14 calendar days.



(*) CP6B - excludes temporary registrations

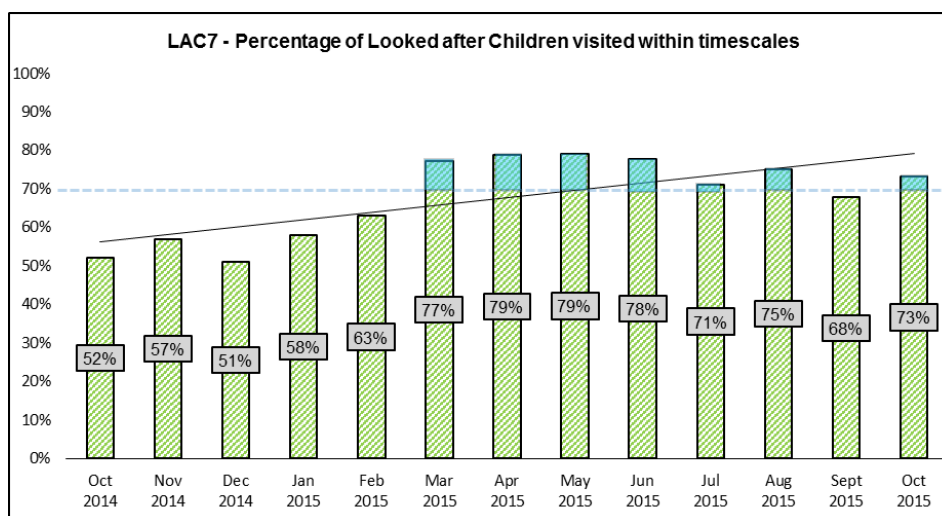
Looked After Children (LAC)

LAC7 - Percentage of Looked after Children visited within timescales

This figure has seen a positive increase of 41% compared to the same period last year. In numbers, 450 out of 614 children were visited within timescales in October.

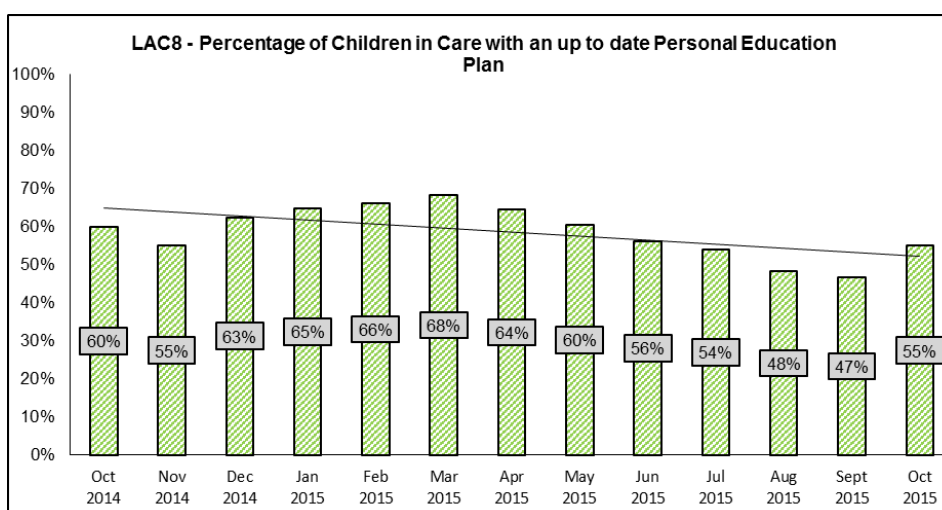
Despite the slightly lower performance levels during the last four months, there is a steep upward trend on this figure, which is thanks to the improved percentages from March 2015 onwards. The figure continues to be above the 12-month average, which is currently 69%, and is just 7% below the highest level of 79% in April and May 2015.

As the graph below shows, the performance level has been maintained above 70% for six consecutive months and seven months in total over the last 12 months, which might assist in defining an acceptable minimum level of performance.



LAC8 - Percentage of Looked after Children with an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The percentage of Looked after Children with an up to date Personal Education Plan decreased month on month since March 2015, but has now seen a positive increase of 18% compared to the previous month, when the figure, at 47%, was at its lowest.



LAC4, LAC5 - Number and percentage of children leaving care for permanence (where end reason was Special Guardianship Order (SGO) (E43, E44) or adoption (E11, E12)), and LAC6 – Number of adoptions and LAC3 - Number of ceasing Looked after Children (episodes)

There has been a 30% increase in the percentage of children leaving care for permanence where the reason was either SGO or adoption when compared to the previous month, and 206% compared to the same period last year.

In numbers, of the total number of 18 ceasing LAC episodes, ten (56%) left care for permanence, of which five were adopted and five left for permanence under SGO. The second graph below shows that generally, a large proportion of children leaving care for permanence are adopted. Reasons for leaving care are further broken down into adoption, SGO and 'other' in the third graph below.

