

Children & Learning Service Performance Report

February 2024



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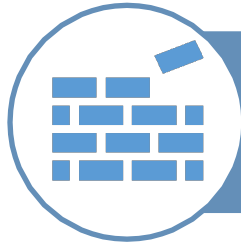
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Purpose

In order to evidence that Children & Learning Services are making a positive difference for children in the city, we consider our monthly performance data that is linked to the key outcomes of our governing strategy, Building for Brilliance 2023.



Building for Brilliance; Building for Sustainability; Building for Families, with Families



Ensure that children get the **right support at the right time**, meeting need early, reducing demand and spend on statutory services



Develop **strong, vibrant localities** where families can receive the help they need and practitioners can share their knowledge and expertise



Support children to **remain within, or return to, their birth families**, seeking out and reuniting family members, reducing care costs and freeing up placements for other children.



Promote **permanence and placement stability**, creating strong forever families and reducing increasingly costly alternatives



Build a **permanent, stable, energised workforce**, increasing consistency for children and reducing agency spend



Embed our **practice framework and practice standards** across the whole service, doing the basics brilliantly and being ambitious in our practice expectations





Right support at the right time – Family Help

Indicator	Jan-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Target	RAG	Direction of travel	So'ton 22/23	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Number of referrals into Early Help	184	220	172	183	131	181	154	172	162	109	139	166	142	144		-	⬆️	-	-	-	-
Number of referrals that were stepped down from CSC (no assessment required)		37	40	33	28	35	35	21	46	27	16	23	18	36		-	⬆️	-	-	-	-
Number of Early Help assessments started	179	112	89	110	73	74	82	119	71	66	89	91	80	80		-	➡️	-	-	-	-
Number of contacts in the month	1893	1839	1598	2023	1544	1828	1948	1804	1471	1532	1923	1763	1459	2015		-	⬇️	-	-	-	-
Rate of contacts per 10,000 population under 18 years old		4222	4240	4289	4265	4213	4229	4272	4173	4123	4166	4159	4171	4207		-	⬇️	-	-	-	-
Number of referrals into statutory service in the month	322	343	330	433	282	301	285	310	263	267	276	315	216	309	273	🔴	⬇️	-	-	-	-
Rate of referrals per 10,000 population under 18 years old		751	753	777	780	770	762	761	760	754	747	732	720	716	647	🔴	⬆️	759.8	640.1	-	544.5
Number of C&F assessments completed	317	322	317	400	309	425	283	292	259	231	222	255	216	266	174	🔴	⬇️	-	-	-	-
Rate of assessments per 10,000 population under 18 years old		784	788	804	800	830	827	829	807	776	756	736	716	707	630	🔴	⬆️	778.4	628.5	-	557.4
Number of children with Child in Need Plan (not CWD)	27	584	538	535	639	524	493	467	462	433	388	464	449	453	-	-	⬇️	-	-	-	-
Number of children with Child in Need Plan (CWD)		222	227	231	233	238	244	254	243	243	237	230	228	223	-	-	⬆️	-	-	-	-



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Right support at the right time – Family Help

Desired outcome

Improved shared understanding of thresholds resulting in less contacts a month, an increase in referrals and assessments for Early Help, a reduction in statutory referrals and assessments and children open to statutory services. This will result in more focused and intensive work with families requiring statutory services resulting in less children subject to CP planning and coming into our care.

Progress analysis

- There is currently a waiting list for support from Early Help in the East of the city, there were 35% fewer referrals into Early Help this January, compared to January '23.
- The number of contacts in January increased by 38% from December, this was the second highest number in the last 12 months.
- The number of referrals (309) was higher than December by 43%, but this was down from January '22 (322) and January '23 (343).
- Assessments were completed for 266 children, which is below average for the last 12 months, and 21% less than January '23.
- There are 120 less children on CIN planning (including children with disabilities) in January '24 than there were in January '23.





Right support at the right time – Family Safeguarding

Indicator	Jan-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Target	RAG	Direction of travel	So'ton 22/23	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Number of strategy discussions held		200	196	217	184	185	207	144	161	152	152	173	124	140	-	-	↓	-	-	-	-
Number of Section 47 enquiries completed		103	158	169	138	126	124	121	86	81	131	112	101	77	-	-	↑	-	-	-	-
Rate of Section 47 enquiries completed		351	353	356	360	356	355	346	336	320	323	306	301	297	260	●	↑	352.2	253.0	-	191.6
Percentage of Strategy discussions resulting in Section 47		52	81	78	75	68	60	84	53	53	86	65	81	55		-	↑	-	-	-	-
Percentage of Section 47s (not already CP or in our care) resulting in ICPC		22	22	38	34	26	43	21	45	20	20	33	12	13			↑				
Number of children subject to CP Plan at end of month	458	288	301	315	347	355	351	345	346	318	311	320	309	304	295	●	↑	-	-	-	-
Rate of children subject to CP plans	93	58	61	64	70	72	71	70	70	64	62	64	62	61	60	●	↑	63.90	52.90	-	43.20
Number of children in our care	548	543	553	545	539	505	517	518	507	510	503	507	510	494	495	●	↑	-	-	-	-
Rate of children in our care per 10,000	111	110	112	111	109	102	105	105	103	103	101	102	102	99	100	●	↑	-	-	-	-
Number of children open to the service (Assessment, CIN, CP, CLA, CL)	2357	2363	2401	2402	2425	2326	2304	2297	2259	2112	2085	2111	2036	2069	-	-	↓	-	-	-	-
Rate of children open to the service (Assessment, CIN, CP, CLA, CL)		478	479	492	482	455	453	448	422	414	418	423	408	415	362	●	↓	524.8	428.8	-	642.7



Right support at the right time – Family Help

Desired outcome

Improved shared understanding of thresholds resulting in less contacts a month, an increase in referrals and assessments for Early Help, a reduction in statutory referrals and assessments and children open to statutory services. This will result in more focused and intensive work with families requiring statutory services resulting in less children subject to CP planning and coming into our care.

Progress analysis

- Whilst there were more strategy discussions in January than December '23, the number (140) was 30% less than January 2024 (200).
- Of those 140 strategy discussion, 55% resulted in a Section 47 enquiry. The number of S.47s (77) were the lowest in the last 12 months, reflecting the work Practice Managers have been doing to work with the professional network to carefully consider thresholds and the analysis of risk.
- Only 13% of section 47s for children not already subject to CP planning or in our care resulted in an initial child protection conference being convened.
- The number of children subject to CP planning reduced to 304, the lowest since March 2023 and closer to the target of 295.
- The number of children in our care has achieved the target (495) and the rate of children in our care is now 99. This is the statistical neighbour average, and a reduction in 49 from January 2023.



Strong, safe & vibrant localities

Indicator	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Target	RAG	Direction of travel	So'ton 22/23	Statistical Neighbourhood	South East	England
Percentage of re-referrals within 12 months	27%	25%	28%	27%	25%	35%	26%	19%	21%	21%	32%	25%	30%	23%	Red	Down	22%	20%		21%
Percentage of referrals leading to NFA	6%	5%	8%	7%	5%	8%	9%	10%	10%	8%	4%	5%	4%	7	Green	Up	-	-	-	-
Percentage of children subject to 2nd or more CP plan	33%	32%	32%	33%	34%	33%	33%	31%	31%	32%	33%	34%	37%	24%	Red	Down	33%	25%		24%
Percentage of children subject to child protection plans with recent core group held in time	76%	76%	78%	77%	85%	83%	79%	69%	85%	84%	89%	74%	68%	95%	Red	Down	-	-	-	-
Percentage of children with Child in Need Plan (not CWD) with CIN review within last 12 weeks	84%	83%	83%	79%	84%	83%	86%	79%	80%	70%	76%	81%	81%	95%	Red	Right	-	-	-	-
Percentage of initial health assessments delivered within 20 working days of date child became looked after.	32%	10%	31%	22%	60%	50%	76%	20%	57%	9%	0%	33%	50%	95%	Red	Up	-	-	-	-
Percentage of children in care for at least 12 months for whom health assessments are up to date.	90%	91%	89%	88%	86%	85%	84%	82%	80%	79%	78%	78%	79%	95%	Red	Up	-	-	-	-



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Strong, safe & vibrant localities

Outcomes

Stronger partner relationships will lead to a better understanding of referral thresholds. Multi-agency plans will be effective at increasing the safety and wellbeing of children. This will lead to a reduction in the referrals from schools, increase in partner agency led Team Around the Family plans, timeliness of Core Group activity, decrease in children with more than one period of CP planning, and increase in Child In Need Plans concluding within 6 months.

Progress analysis

- Of the children referred to the service in January, 30% were previously known to the service. This could suggest that children and their families with higher needs are struggling to manage with support from universal or early help services, but it could also be that once families have been involved with Children Services, when further challenges arise, there is a tendency to refer them back in.
- The percentage of referrals leading to NFA was the lowest in the last 12 months at 4%.
- Core group activity dipped in December to 74% and it was linked to the Christmas holidays and expected to improve in January but has declined further to 68%. Teams report this is a recording issue and core groups are taking place, so this will be interrogated in assurance clinics with managers.
- Initial health assessments for children coming into care were achieved for 50% of the 8 children accommodated.





Children remain within or return to their birth families

Indicator	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Target	RAG	Direction of travel	So'ton 22/23	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Number of children in our care	553	545	539	505	517	518	507	510	505	504	507	510	494	495	🟢	⬆️				
Rate of children in our care per 10,000	112	111	109	102	105	105	103	103	102	101	102	102	99	100	🟢	⬆️				
Number of new CLA in month	23	19	14	3	31	17	10	17	15	13	17	21	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of new CLA in month who are UASC	4	4	5	1	2	2	2	3	4	2	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of Ceased CLA in the month excluding UASC	10	23	18	34	15	18	13	14	17	13	10	15	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of CLA achieved CAO or SGO	4	5	3	6	4	4	2	3	5	3	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of CLA returned home as part of care planning	0	2	5	8	2	5	3	5	6	6	6	5	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of CLA placed with parents at the end of the month	48	48	48	42	48	44	39	39	34	33	38	43	48	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of CLA placed in Connected Carer placements at the end of the month	60	56	59	54	52	50	47	40	42	41	51	56	54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



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Children remain within or return to their birth families

Outcomes – Children in our care return to live with their birth families, and more children are enabled to remain with their birth families, so we bring less children into our care through intensive working with families at child in need and child protection.

Progress analysis –

- The rate of children in our care has surpassed our target of 100.
- This has been achieved through significant work in the last 2 months to return children to family members and move children out of residential placements, alongside a high level of preventative work to keep children safe at home, and quickly return where safe to do so when accommodated in a crisis.
- We have 7 fewer children in residential placements than we did in October 2023.
- In January 2024, there are 54 children placed with extended family member, up from 40 in August 2023
- There are 48 children currently placed with parents whilst assessments and planning are ongoing.





Promote permanence and placement stability

Indicator	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Target	RAG	Direction of travel	So'ton 22/23	Statistical Neighbours	South East	England
Number of children in our care	553	545	539	505	517	518	507	510	505	504	507	510	494	495	🟢	↑				
Percentage of CLA at end of month with 3 or more placements during the year	15	15	14	15	15	14	16	18	17	19	18	19	18	10	🔴	↑	13	10.5		10
Number of CLA placed in IFA placements as at the end of the month	136	137	139	140	144	146	141	147	142	141	137	133	132	100	🔴	↑				
Percentage of CLA placed in IFA placements as at the end of the month	24	24	25	27	27	26	27	29	28	28	27	26	27	20	🔴	↓				
Number of CLA placed in Residential placements including semi-independent	74	71	75	71	70	70	75	76	76	80	78	77	73	60	🔴	↑				
Number of CLA placed in residential - Independent Sector	42	43	42	42	43	43	42	43	43	43	38	35		30	🟡	↑				
Percentage of CLA placed in Residential placements - independent sector	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7		6	🟡	↑				
Number of CLA placed in unregulated/ unregistered settings at the end of the month	31	29	33	30	30	36	42	42	44	48	48	49	47	20	🔴	↑				
Percentage of CLA placed in unregulated/ unregistered settings at the end of the month	6	5	6	6	6	7	8	8	8	10	9	10	10	4	🔴	→				
Number of CLA placed for adoption at period end	36	30	30	20	19	19	13	15	15	17	15	13	13							
Number of children placed with SCC foster carers (including connected carers)	228	230	214	202	213	206	195	193	198	201	206	205	204	285	🔴	↓				
Percentage of children placed with SCC foster carers (including connected carers)	41	42	40	40	40	39	38	38	39	40	41	40	41	58	🔴	↑				



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Promote permanence and placement stability

Progress analysis

- Whilst our overall number of children in our care is coming down steadily and safely, our rate of children with three or more placements in a year is higher than the target. In January 2024 it reduced to 18% but was 15% in January 2023.
- 204 children are placed within our own foster placements, this is 41% of the overall cohort and up from 193 in August 2023. The ambition is for this to reach 58%, but this will depend on successful recruitment and assessment of new fostering households alongside retaining current carers. Nationally there are significant challenges to recruiting foster carers with significant competition from independent fostering agencies that are able to pay foster carers significantly more per child in their care.
- We have 43 young people in unregulated or unregistered placements. The majority (39) of these are 16 and 17 years old and all the settings we are currently using are in the process of being registered with Ofsted.



Promote permanence and placement stability

Education

There are 4 children in our care under 16 that are out of education, or not accessing education, all 4 have Special Educational Needs. 1 has tuition arrangements in place. 2 of these children have had a placement change which has impacted on access to education. 1 child is applying for college, and 2 have searches for specialist provisions underway. 1 child is in a crisis placement whilst a foster placement is identified.

16 looked after young people aged 16 and 17 are not in employment, education or training. 3 of these have Special Educational Needs.



Permanent, stable workforce

Indicator	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Target	RAG	Direction of travel
Average number of children per primary caseholder (based on 1 FTE)	14.92	15.88	15.43	15.31	16.19	15.87	16.40	15.64	14.50	14.21	15.12	15.82	16.00			↓
Average number of children per qualified Social Worker (1 FTE)	15.75	16.65	15.80	15.66	16.38	15.76	16.67	16.46	14.98	14.76	16.33	17.92	17.73			↑
Total number of case holders with 20+ children	47	48	54	53	50	43	47	36	37	34	43	48	44			↑
Average number of children per worker with 20+ children (1 FTE)	22.55	23.27	22.72	23.15	22.76	22.65	22.74	22.88	22.30	21.53	22.16	22.54	22.77			↓
Average number of children per worker in top 40	22.98	23.93	23.68	24.05	23.45	22.85	23.23	22.40	22.05	21.15	22.33	23.05	23.05			→
Percentage of CLA that have been in care for 12+m, with same social worker for last 6 months	54	50	49	47	59	62	68	74	75	80	78	73	73	80	●	→
Percentage of children open for 6+ months that have had 2 or more social workers in the last 6 months	38%	38%	37%	36%	34%	35%	33%	32%	39%	38%	36%	37%	38%	25	●	↓



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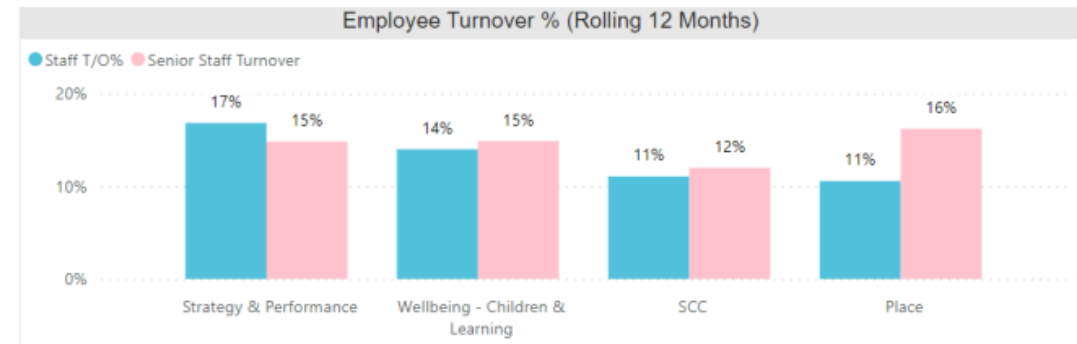
Permanent, stable workforce

Progress analysis

- Caseloads for social workers have increased to take into account how children with disabilities on a child in need plan are allocated. This is more representative of the caseloads being held by practitioners.
- There has been a gradual increase in the number of children being held by the 40 social workers to 23.05 for the last 2 months.
- Employee turnover has remained stable in Children & Learning. In our neighbouring local authorities, they have seen an increased reliance on agency staff, which drive up costs and create increased instability for families.
- Maintaining a stable and high-quality workforce remains a key priority for leadership, especially at a time of change and where neighbours offer higher wages to attract permanent staff. The recent launch of the re-design proposals can create uncertainty for staff and there are attractive opportunities for them within neighbouring authorities. Focussed consideration is being given to supporting staff through this process.

Outcomes

Children and families maintain working relationships with consistent practitioners, who benefit from stable management support and oversight. Agency staff numbers will reduce contributing towards financial responsibility.





Embedding Practice Framework and Standards

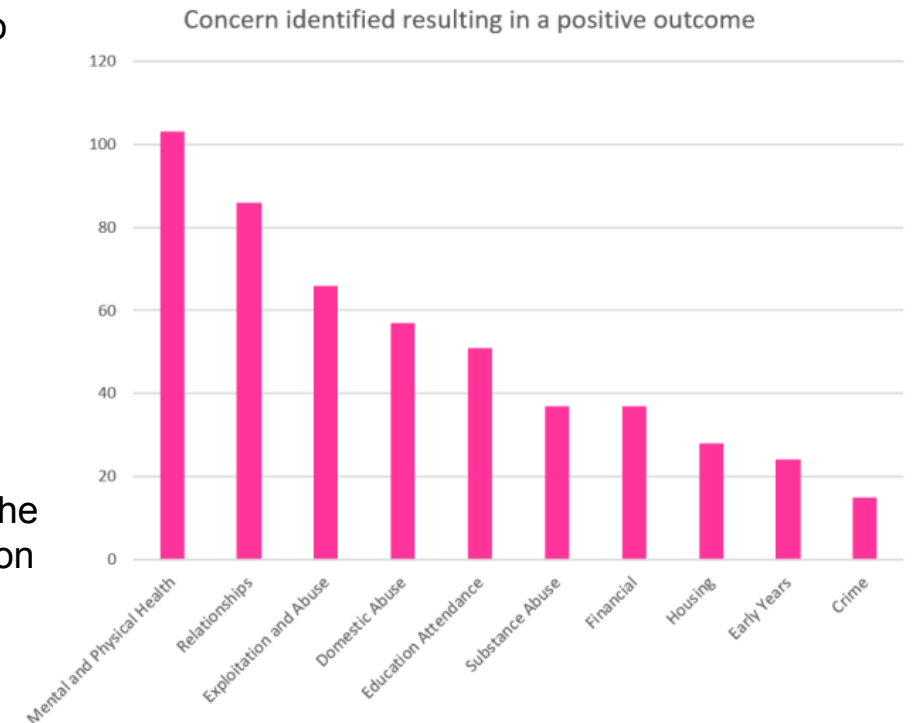
Outcomes –

Audits will evidence

- An improved quality of supervision and standard of practice.
- Contingency planning will be clear in all plans from the beginning of interventions and involvements.
- Systemic practice will be evidenced in care recording audits of visits, assessments, plans, supervisions, chronologies.
- Safe & Together will be evident in work with families increasing involvement of perpetrators, partnering with survivors and achieving long term safety for children.

Progress analysis – December Audit overview:

- No case record audits were undertaken in December due to Supporting Families Benchmarking being prioritised.
- The benchmarking looks at specific positive outcomes for children and their families.
 - Overall, 147 benchmarking forms have been completed and recorded on Care Director
 - 74 of the forms have 3 or more unique positive outcomes, and 59 forms have 1 or 2 positive outcomes
 - The chart show the overall benchmarking activity and the number of positive outcomes for each of the 10 concerns identified, at the end of the intervention with families.
- We are evidencing positive outcomes for children and families our service work with.



Performance - Visiting

Progress analysis

Visits to children on Child in Need and Child Protection Plans both met or exceeded the target for statutory time scales. 3 weekly visiting to CiN children improved towards the target of 90%.

Visiting remains a key focus in assurance clinics.

Indicator	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Target	RAG	Direction of travel
Percentage of children open to Early Help with a visit in the last 4 weeks	54%	66%	62%	71%	61%	60%	66%	67%	58%	71%	69%	62%	64%	95%	Red	Up
Percentage of children with an active Child in Need Plan (not CWD) visited within last 6 weeks	98%	98%	97%	96%	98%	95%	96%	94%	96%	96%	95%	96%	95%	95%	Green	Down
Percentage of children with an active Child in Need Plan (not CWD) visited within last 3 weeks	80%	81%	77%	84%	81%	74%	77%	77%	77%	86%	85%	89%	85%	90%	Yellow	Down
Percentage of children with an active Child in Need Plan (CWD) visited within agreed timescales	89%	92%	86%	85%	86%	95%	88%	77%	73%	80%	82%	77%	71%	95%	Red	Down
Percentage of children subject to Child Protection Plan visited within last 10 working days	95%	93%	87%	90%	92%	90%	84%	86%	90%	88%	92%	85%	92%	95%	Green	Up
Percentage of children subject to Child Protection Plan visited within last 4 weeks	99%	98%	98%	97%	98%	98%	97%	96%	98%	97%	99%	96%	98%	95%	Yellow	Up
Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within agreed timescales	81%	79%	86%	89%	92%	89%	89%	83%	81%	81%	85%	83%	83%	95%	Red	Right



Performance - Supervision

Progress analysis

- Supervision for children with a Child in Need plan and Child Protection Plan both exceed the targets in December.
- Supervision within the Early Help service improved again towards the target.
- There was a dip in supervision within the Care Leavers service.
- Supervision is one element of management oversight and decision making for children and families.

Indicator	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Target	RAG	Direction of travel
Percentage of children open to Early Help with supervision in timescales	67%	87%	74%	78%	82%	72%	82%	89%	82%	81%	68%	79%	74%	95%	Red	Down
Percentage of children open for assessment who had supervision in timescales	96%	93%	93%	93%	91%	91%	97%	94%	94%	98%	92%	93%	95%	95%	Green	Up
Percentage of children with a Child in Need Plan (not CWD) who had supervision within timescales	93%	90%	89%	90%	96%	85%	79%	84%	86%	89%	91%	97%	89%	95%	Red	Down
Percentage of children with a Child in Need Plan (CWD) who had their supervision within timescales	100%	99%	98%	96%	86%	84%	79%	77%	77%	83%	87%	84%	81%	95%	Red	Down
Percentage of CPP who had their supervision and within timescales	93%	96%	86%	91%	98%	87%	85%	89%	93%	96%	94%	96%	88%	95%	Red	Down
Percentage of CLA who had their supervision and was within the timescale	86%	86%	78%	85%	94%	88%	90%	78%	73%	81%	83%	83%	92%	95%	Yellow	Up
Percentage of Care Leavers who had their supervision and was within the timescale	45%	86%	81%	86%	92%	92%	88%	83%	79%	83%	81%	77%	88%	95%	Red	Up

