

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Children & Young People
SERVICE: Specialist Services
PERIOD: Quarter 3 to period end 31st December 2008

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Specialist Services Department third quarter period up to 31 December 2008. It describes key developments and progress against 'key' milestones and performance indicators for the service.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained in Appendix 6

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

2.1 CHILDREN IN CARE

Two starter flats have now been made available by HHT to care leavers. One flat in Runcorn and one in Widnes is now being equipped in order for care leavers to take up tenancy. Support will be provided to the care leavers by social workers, community support workers and partner agencies.

The Children and Young Persons Act was introduced in November 2008 and introduces new requirements in respect of Children in Care. These include an increased responsibility to place children within their home area, increased choice of accommodation, extension of the role of Independent Visitor to all children in care, establishment of the statutory role of Designated Teacher in each school, bursaries for young people in higher education and not disrupting children's school placements at key stages. Work has commenced on introducing these requirements

2.2 SAFEGUARDING

A Safeguarding unit will be established from April 2008. The aim is to provide greater coherence in safeguarding activity. The unit brings together lead professionals to provide the advice, support as well as the scrutiny and challenge to all agencies delivering services for children.

2.3 HSCB

The HSCB confirmed its roles and responsibilities and links with other strategic partnerships. This includes HSCB establishing a service framework using the current system for monitoring child protection activity as a model for monitoring activity for the cohort of children

covered by Level 3b. It has also been agreed that HSCB via its Executive Board will take the strategic lead in relation to anti-bullying strategy. HSCB to receive regular reports from the Alcohol Harm Strategy Group in relation to children and young people. This is an opportunity for the two strategic groups to work collaboratively in terms of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.

HSCB hosted a Pan Cheshire Alcohol Harm Reduction Workshop on 3rd July 2008. This was an opportunity to share learning and identify any gaps. The workshop was well attended with both statutory, non-statutory & third sector agencies represented. HSCB has made links with the Neighbourhood Management Strategic Board. This is an opportunity to engage with local communities.

HSCB is collaborating (with other NW LSCBs) in a GONW Project with CEMACH (Confidential Enquiry for Maternal & Child Health). This is an opportunity to share learning from child deaths across the region and CEMACH can also provide detailed information for individual LSCB's.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

3.1 Capacity Issues

We continue to experience an increase in demand for specialist services, and there has been another spike in the admission of children to care who have been placed with independent providers, at considerably increased costs.

The Placement Strategy and service review identifies where we need to 'invest to save', although in the medium term there will be considerable budget pressures and deficits.

To build upon the Targeted Support to Families project, a Locality Working pilot will be starting in February to provide an integrated multi-agency response for children and families across the levels of need. The aim is to address the demand for specialist services by delivering much earlier co-ordinated interventions

3.2 Impact of Baby P

The publication of the Serious Case Review and the revised Ofsted inspection of Haringey has created an increased level of anxiety across agencies in child protection work. There is potential for this anxiety to impact upon child protection plans and the wider management of risk to children. However multi-agency dialogue and working remains strong, and the Safeguarding Children Board has put a strategy in place to address the increased level of anxiety, particularly evident amongst frontline staff, which Baby P has provoked.

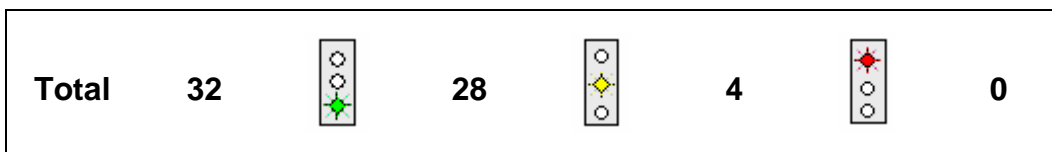
3.3 HSCB

HSCB has identified the need to explore issues facing non Halton

Children in Care placed in this area. Initially agreed that relevant agency managers will meet in order to identify concerns/ issues with a view to reporting back to HSCB

HSCB identified the need to establish a Communication and Engagement Sub Group, which can focus solely on this activity, which is currently led by HSCB Training Sub Group. This will be an opportunity to develop an HSCB “Shadow Board” made up of children and young people anxiety across agencies in child protection work. There is potential for this anxiety to impact upon child protection plans and the wider management of risk to children.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

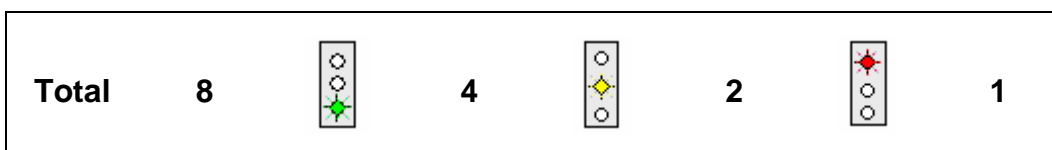


Of the 32 milestones for the service, 28 are on track for completion, or have already been achieved. There is some doubt around 4 of them being completed within the specified timeframe. For further details, please refer to Appendix 1.

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW




A documented review of current and future supply and demand of placements for Children in Care (Placement Strategy) is going through a process of consultation and scrutiny.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Of the 8 key indicators for the service, 4 are on target. Two indicators have been assigned an amber light, and 1 is red as the target will probably be missed. One new indicator relating to entrants to the Youth Justice System is reported for the first time, but no target was set at the start of the year so a traffic light is not assigned. For further details, please refer to Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	23		7		2		0
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Other performance indicators are routinely reported in quarters 2 and 4. This quarter, 2 other indicators are being reported by exception, for further details please refer to Appendix 3. Of the remaining 21 key indicators are 7 on track, and 14 cannot be reported as data, or revised data, is not yet available.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

For further details, please refer to Appendix 4

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2008-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS








During 2007/08 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.








10.0 DATA QUALITY









The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.




11.0 APPENDICES








Appendix 1- Progress against Objectives/ Milestones Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators Appendix 4- Progress against LPSA Targets Appendix 5- Financial Statement Appendix 6- Explanation of traffic light symbols

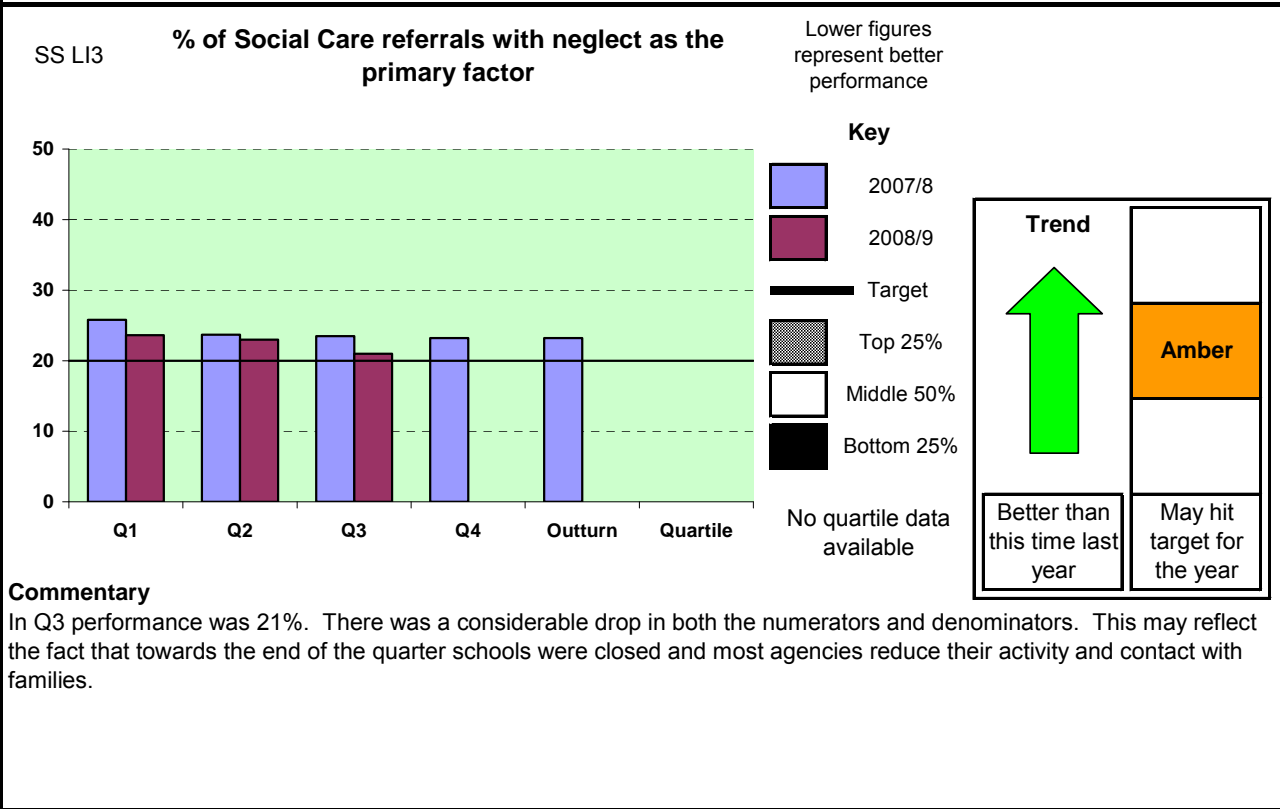
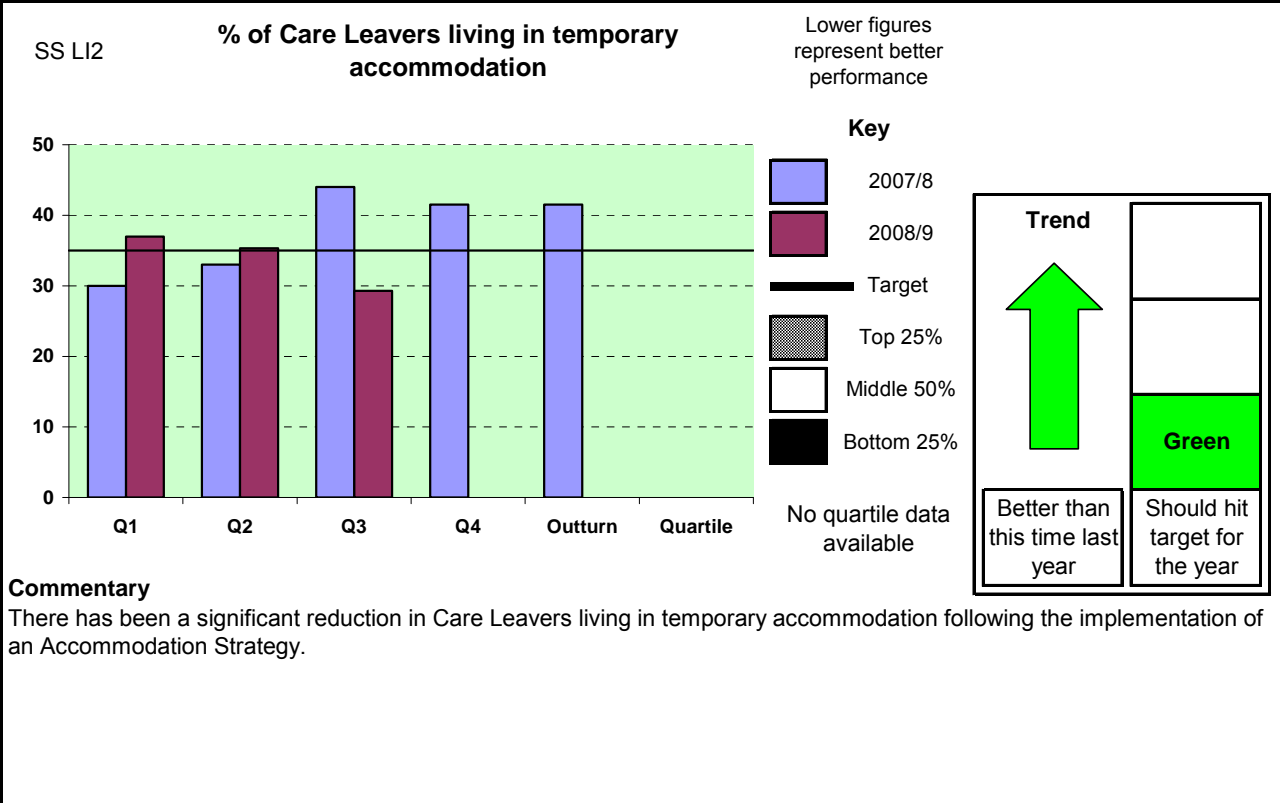
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
SS 1	To improve outcomes for looked after children	Children in Care mini trust integrated into single Children's Trust, Mar 2009		On track
		All children in Care have an up to date PEP, Mar 2009		On track
		All children in Care are offered a Health Assessment during the year and those that refuse are given alternative access to health services		Completed. Process in place.
		All children in Care identified as at risk of offending during the year are referred to YOT		Completed. Process in place.
SS 2	To support children and young people to be mentally and emotionally healthy	Emotional Health & Mental Well Being mini trust integrated in single children's trust, Mar 2009		On Track – new Trust structure agreed, and the relationship between EHMWB Board with Service deliver partnerships will be agreed by March 2009.
		Stop admission of under 18's to adult mental health wards (except in exceptional circumstances) through further development of transitional services, Mar 2009		Consultation on alternative provision ended 25.11.08. Development work ongoing.
		Develop specialist CAMHS 24/7 cover, Mar 2009		On Track

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		Actions identified within the Emotional Health and Wellbeing action plan completed within agreed timescales		On Track
SS 3	To ensure the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities are exercised to maximise opportunities for Children in Care and Care Leavers	Complete corporate parenting actions identified in the Children in Care Strategy within agreed timescales		On Track
		Increase the number of work placements offered to Children in Care and Care Leavers by 10% against baseline, Mar 2009		10 apprenticeships being developed for care leavers to ensure target is met.
		Hold a Corporate Parenting conference to launch the new pledge and the Children in Care Council, Sep 2008		Conference held on 10 th October 08. Launch completed.
SS 4	To provide a range of targeted support services for vulnerable children	Preventative and Child in Need mini trusts integrated into single Children's Trust, Mar 2009		On Track
		Review of the impact of the neglect protocol will be carried out with those families receiving support and whose children are not on the CPR, Mar 2009		On Track
		Work commissioned from Lancaster University to look at the impact CAF has on service provision with the learning to influence practice and how services are organised, Mar 2009		Report presented to HSCB in December 08 and action plan agreed.

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
SS 5	To improve placement choice and quality of care for Children in Care	Implement the recommendations from the Fostering and Adoption inspections within agreed timescales		Completed
		Introduce induction standards for all new Foster Carers, Mar 2009		Introduced for all carers
		Target recruitment of baby adopters and adopters outside the borough to increase the number of adoptions during the year		Targeted recruitment in Place
		Provide a programme of training for carers to meet their identified needs during the year		On Track
		Implement competency based assessments for carers, Mar 2009		On Track
		Implement revised Accommodation Strategy, Sep 2008		Implemented with actions ongoing
SS 6	To provide a range of support and accommodation services for young people over 16 yrs and for care leavers	Identify partnership opportunities for commissioning of semi-independent accommodation e.g. development of Supported Lodgings, Mar 2009		On Track
		Accommodation Support Worker to track all housing applications by Care Leavers during the year		On Track

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		Advocate for RSL's to increase options for care leavers via Housing Partnership Board, Mar 2009		On Track
SS 7	To increase awareness and engagement in Safeguarding	Develop a wider remit for the Safeguarding Board by performance monitoring key stay safe activities e.g. reduction in accidents in the home or admissions of children to A/E due to alcohol harm, Mar 2009		HSCB in process of identifying areas for performance monitoring which reflect the priorities identified at the HSCB Development Day on 04.12.08. HSCB & Children's Trust Executive Boards will be meeting in January 2009 in order to clarify respective priority areas and lead responsibilities. Clearly, the issues arising from the Haringey case may have an impact upon the HSCB priorities for the next two years.
		Deliver a programme of training on the management of allegations against the adults who work with children, particularly to the third sector during the year		In the last quarter, briefings and training has been delivered to the Third Sector forum. 3 Lado workshops were delivered at a Conference in December 08 capturing over 100 delegates. A programme of future briefings is to be established.

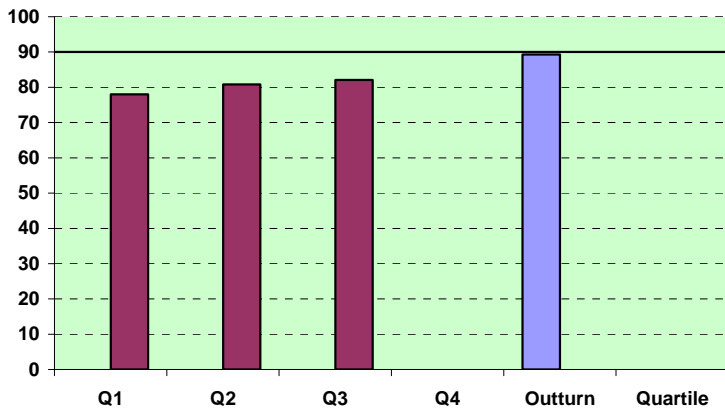
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		Provide safeguarding training to the same accredited standards as professionals for a further 20 parents, Mar 2009		Difficulties in recruiting the safeguarding development post are impacting on this objective. There is some limited cover for the post and HSCB will be endeavouring to run a another training session for parents
SS 8	To improve continuity of planning and services for Children with Disabilities	All young people with complex needs aged 14 and 17yrs will be offered a person centred plan as a priority, Mar 2009		All young people have been offered a plan in this age group- Completed
		Review of Carer's Strategy, Mar 2009		In progress and on track.
		Full implementation of Aim Higher for Disabled Children, Sep 2008		Plans in progress and on track.
SS 9	To improve choice and level of short break provision	Baseline information established on range and volume of short break provision, Sep 2008		Business planning tool completed
		Needs analysis undertaken, Mar 2009		Work underway re consultation and data collection
		Implementation of Pathfinder pilot for Short Break Provision, Sep 2008		Pathfinder work now in progress linking to National Support Agency –Together for Disabled Children



NI 59

Initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 7 working days of referral DCSF DSO

Higher figures represent better performance



Key

- 2007/8
- 2008/9
- Target
- Top 25%
- Middle 50%
- Bottom 25%

No quartile data available

Trend	Green
	Should hit target for the year
No data for same Qtr last year	

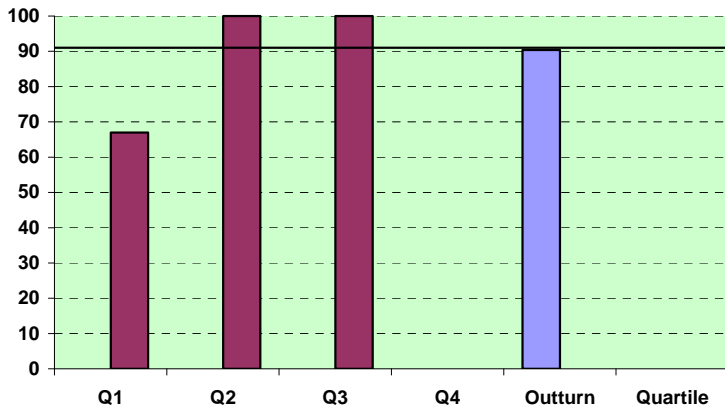
Commentary

820 Initial Assessments were completed during April to December 2008 of which 673 were completed within 7 working days. There have been some data quality issues due to ICT problems around access to e-forms, however it is expected that the target for the year will be achieved.

NI 60

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

Higher figures represent better performance



Key

- 2007/8
- 2008/9
- Target
- Top 25%
- Middle 50%
- Bottom 25%

No quartile data available

Trend	Green
	Should hit target for the year
No data for same Qtr last year	

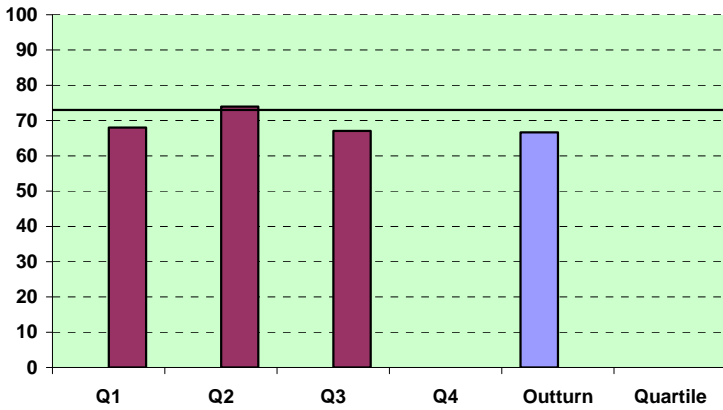
Commentary

All core assessments are being completed within the required timescale.

NI 63

**Stability of placements of looked after children:
length of placement**

Higher figures represent better performance



Key

- 2007/8
- 2008/9
- Target
- Top 25%
- Middle 50%
- Bottom 25%

No quartile data available

Trend	Amber
	May hit target for the year
No data for same Qtr last year	

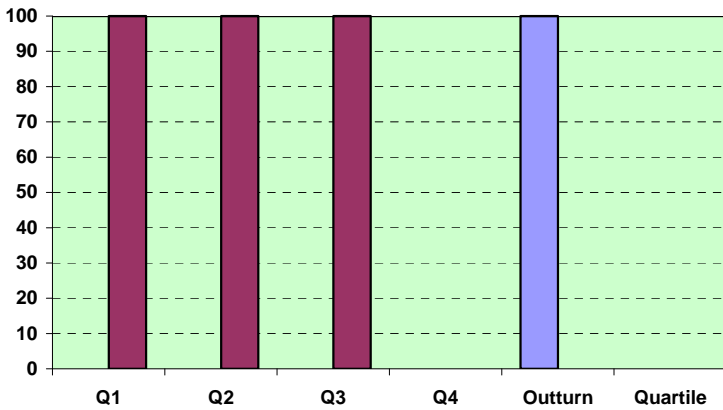
Commentary

Of the 70 children aged under 16 there were 47 of them in a stable placement. An analysis of the cohort is currently underway to identify issues and inform remedial action.

NI 67

Child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales DCSF DSO

Higher figures represent better performance



Key

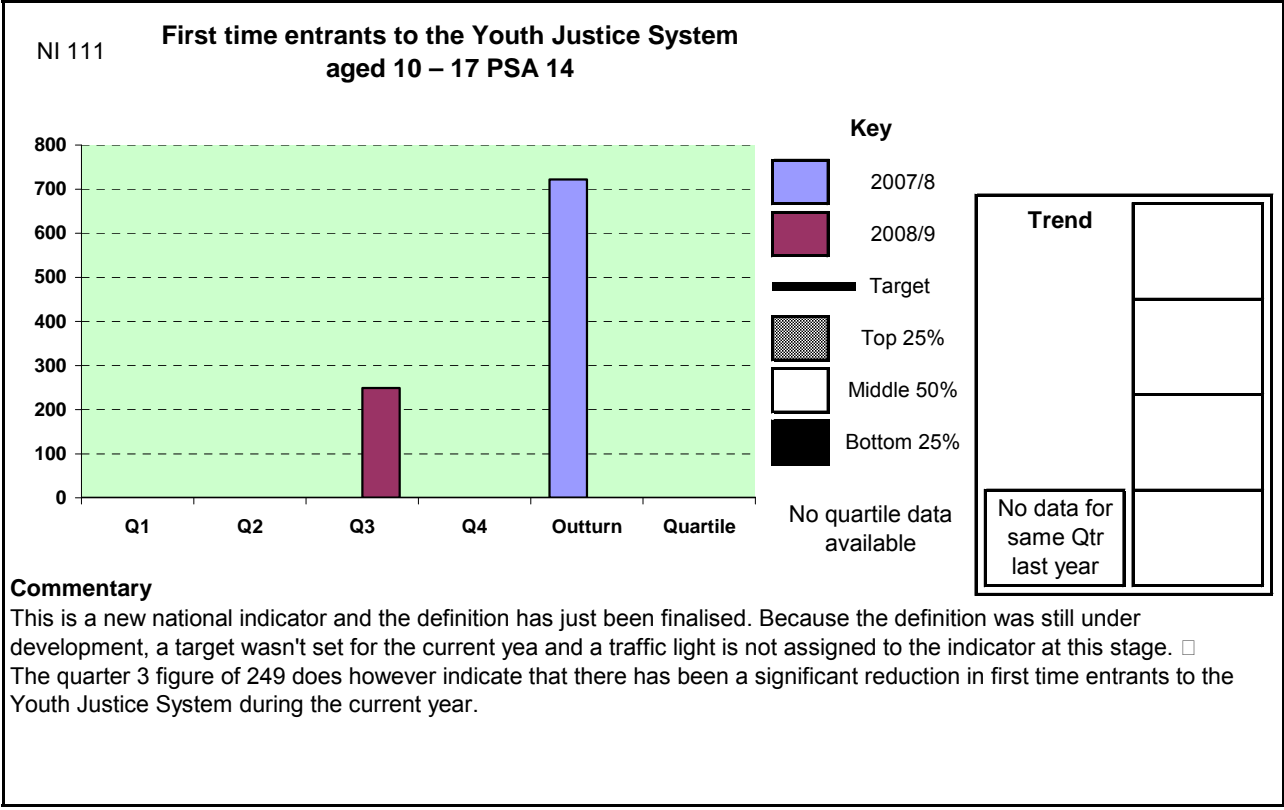
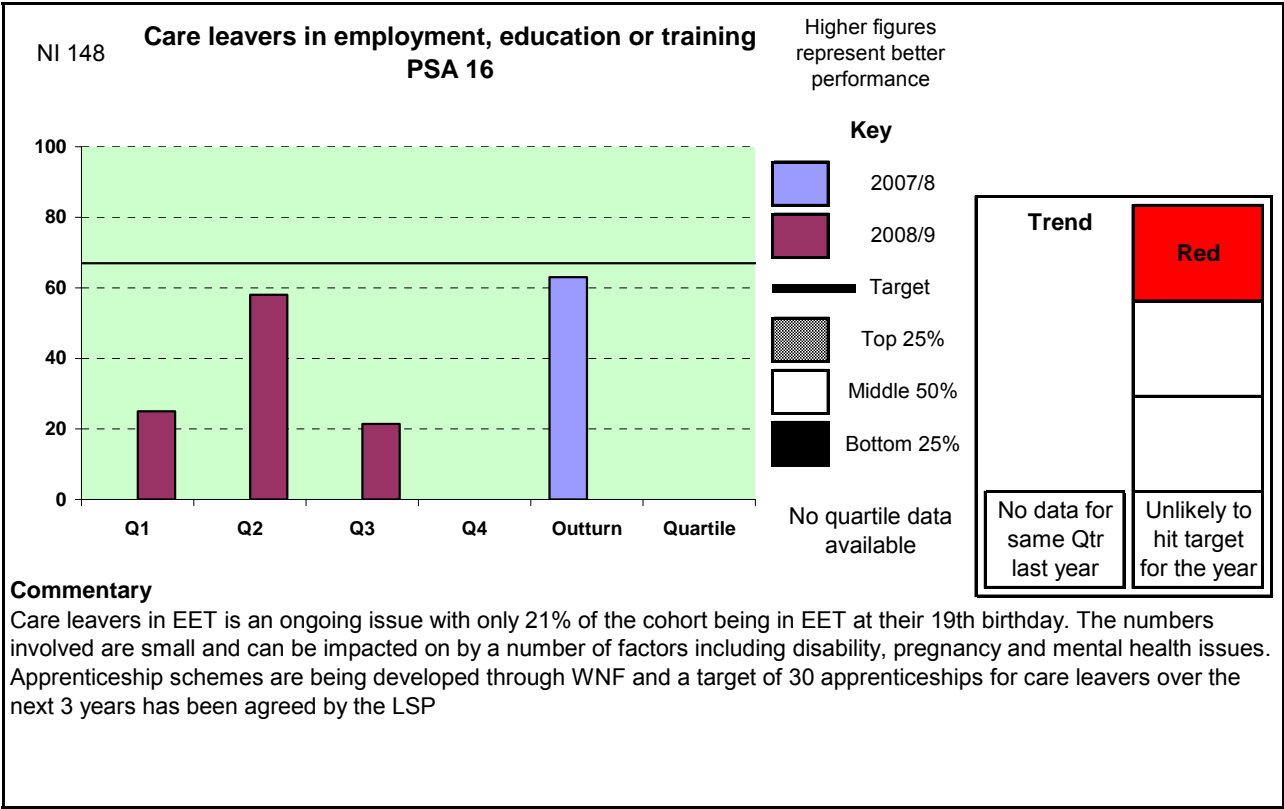
- 2007/8
- 2008/9
- Target
- Top 25%
- Middle 50%
- Bottom 25%



No quartile data available


Trend	Green
	Should hit target for the year
No data for same Qtr last year	

Commentary

All Child Protection cases are reviewed within statutory timescales



Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 3	Progress	Commentary
Service Delivery						
NI68	Referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment	95%	95%	90.9%		902 referrals were received during April to December 2008 of which 820 resulted in a completed IA.
NI147	Care leavers in suitable accommodation	78.6%	80%	78.57%		For Q3 and Q4 the 903 cohort will be used to calculate the numbers for this indicator, therefore the actual cohort should be the same for Quarters 1-4 for 2008 / 09

LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 07/08	Perform 08/09	Traffic light	Commentary
11	<p>Improved opportunities and levels of participation in education, training and employment by children in the care of Halton Council.</p> <p>1. The percentage school attendance of children who have been looked after for at least 12 months</p>	89.6% May 05	92.6% May 08	92.4%	92.59% May08		<p>Stretch target achieved. The average school attendance of children in care at 30th September who had been in care for at least 12 months was 92.6% between 1/9/2007 and 30/5/2008.</p>

SPECIALIST SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Revenue Budget as at 31st December 2008

	Annual Revised Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual to Date £'000	Variance to Date (Overspend) £'000	Actual Including Commitments £'000
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Employees	5,800	4,308	4,249	59	4,249
Premises	469	15	20	(5)	20
Supplies & Services	602	797	687	110	687
Transport	124	92	70	22	70
Out of Borough Placements	2,094	1,133	1,721	(588)	1,721
Foster Carer Payments	1,991	1,443	1,205	238	1,205
Asset Rentals	25	0	0	0	0
Central Support Services Recharges	606	0	0	0	0
Commissioned Services	1,921	966	966	0	966
Divisional Expenditure	85	56	56	0	56
Direct Payments	11	29	57	(28)	57
Section 17 Payments	46	39	34	5	34
Contribution to CwD Pooled Budget	1,111	354	282	72	282
Total Expenditure	14,885	9,232	9,347	(115)	9,347
<u>Income</u>					
CAMHS Grant	-251	-190	-190	0	-190
Care Matters Grant	-101	-76	-76	0	-76
Child Death Review Processes Grant	-22	-17	-17	0	-17
Children's Fund Grant	-484	-363	-363	0	-363
Children's Social Care Workforce Grant	-57	-42	-42	0	-42
Positive Activities for Young People Grant	-114	-85	-85	0	-85
Teenage Pregnancy Grant	-108	-80	-80	0	-80
Youth Opportunity Fund Grant	-225	-112	-112	0	-112
ICT Capital Grant for Mobile Technology	-29	-18	-18	0	-18
Local Change Fund Grant	0	0	-35	35	-35
Parenting Support Group Grant	0	0	-27	27	-27
Young Persons Substance Misuse Grant	-200	-157	-157	0	-157
Cohesion Grant	0	0	-20	20	-20
Other Income	-383	-404	-504	100	-504
HBC Child Trust Arrangements	-226	-225	-225	0	-225
Total Income	-2,200	-1,769	-1,951	182	-1,951
Net Expenditure	12,685	7,463	7,396	67	7,396

Comments on the above figures

In overall terms, revenue spending at the end of Quarter 3 is below budget profile. The budget is expected to be marginally below budget profile at the end of the financial year.

The Employee budget is currently below budget profile due to a number of posts remaining vacant since the start of the financial year. Currently, Agency staff are employed in a majority of these posts and it is anticipated that spend will be in line with the budget profile towards the end of the financial year.

The Supplies & Services budget is currently below budget profile which includes spending on training, children in care payments and postages being significantly lower than anticipated.

The Transportation budget is currently below budget profile which includes spend on volunteer drivers being significantly lower than anticipated.

The Out of Borough Placements budget is currently above budget profile. This budget is extremely volatile. The Foster Carer Payments budget is below budget profile due to a marked reduction in the number of in house foster carers when compared to the budget provision. Current projections indicate that the combined expenditure may exceed the budget by approximately £350,000 at the year end. The department is monitoring these budgets closely and is in the process of analysing levels of provision.

The Direct Payments budget is currently above budget profile. This is due to an increase in the number of Direct Payments when compared to the budget. The department is monitoring this budget closely to ensure that the overspend is contained and managed within the directorate.

The Income budgets are above budget profile as a direct result of additional income being rolled forward from 2007/8, notably, the Local Change Fund Grant and the Parenting Support Grant and the additional income the department has received from the PCT.

SPECIALIST SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Children with Disabilities Pooled Budget as at 31st December 2008

(The following provides a summary of the council's contribution to the CwD Pooled Budget)

	Annual Revised Budget £'000	Budget to Date £'000	Actual to Date £'000	Variance to Date (Overspend) £'000	Actual Including Commitments £'000
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Employees	885	664	689	(25)	689
Premises	74	20	20	0	20
Supplies & Services	1,054	348	379	(31)	379
Transport	23	18	23	(5)	23
Asset Rentals	57	0	0	0	0
Central Support Services Recharges	4	0	0	0	0
Commissioned Services	164	132	132	0	132
Direct Payments	23	0	0	0	0
Section 17 Payments	10	8	8	0	8
Total Expenditure	2,294	1,190	1,251	(61)	1,251
<u>Income</u>					
CAMHS Grant	-38	-27	-27	0	-27
Carers Grant	-121	-91	-91	0	-91
Other Income	-66	0	-18	18	-18
PCT Contribution to Pooled Budget	-958	-718	-833	115	-833
Total Income	-1,183	-836	-969	133	-969
Net Expenditure	1,111	354	282	72	282

Comments on the above figures




In overall terms, revenue spending at the end of Quarter 3 is below budget profile. The budget is expected to be marginally below budget profile at the end of the financial year.

The Employee budget is currently above budget profile due to the additional use of Agency staff covering vacant posts within the pool. It is anticipated that the Employee budget will be in line with the budget profile towards the end of the financial year with a reduction in the use of Agency staff.

The Supplies and Service budget is currently above budget profile. This is due to a number of overspends in relation to equipment and furniture and travel and subsistence. The department is monitoring these budgets closely to ensure the overspend is contained within the pool.

The Income budget is currently above budget profile due to additional income received from the PCT towards the operation of the pooled budget. This additional income will offset the overspends in the Employees, Premises and Supplies and Services budgets.

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<u>Green</u>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u>.</p>
<u>Amber</u>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<u>Red</u>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain that the objective will not be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>