

Performance trends across Early Help and Children's Social care June 2019 – November 2019

**Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee
21st January 2020**

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Families & Education**

Overview of November 2019 performance indicators

GOING WELL OR BETTER

- Caseloads continue to be below target across the service at an average of 16 per worker in November 2019
- Improvement in the timeliness of Assessments, up to 86%
- 24% reduction in the number of children with child protection (CP) plans since April 2019
- Ongoing reductions in the number of cases in proceedings and public law outline (PLO)
- Timeliness of visits to children subject to CP Plans (97%) and CLA (95%)
- 100% of CP Plans and 93% of CLA Plans were reviewed within timescale

ONES TO WATCH

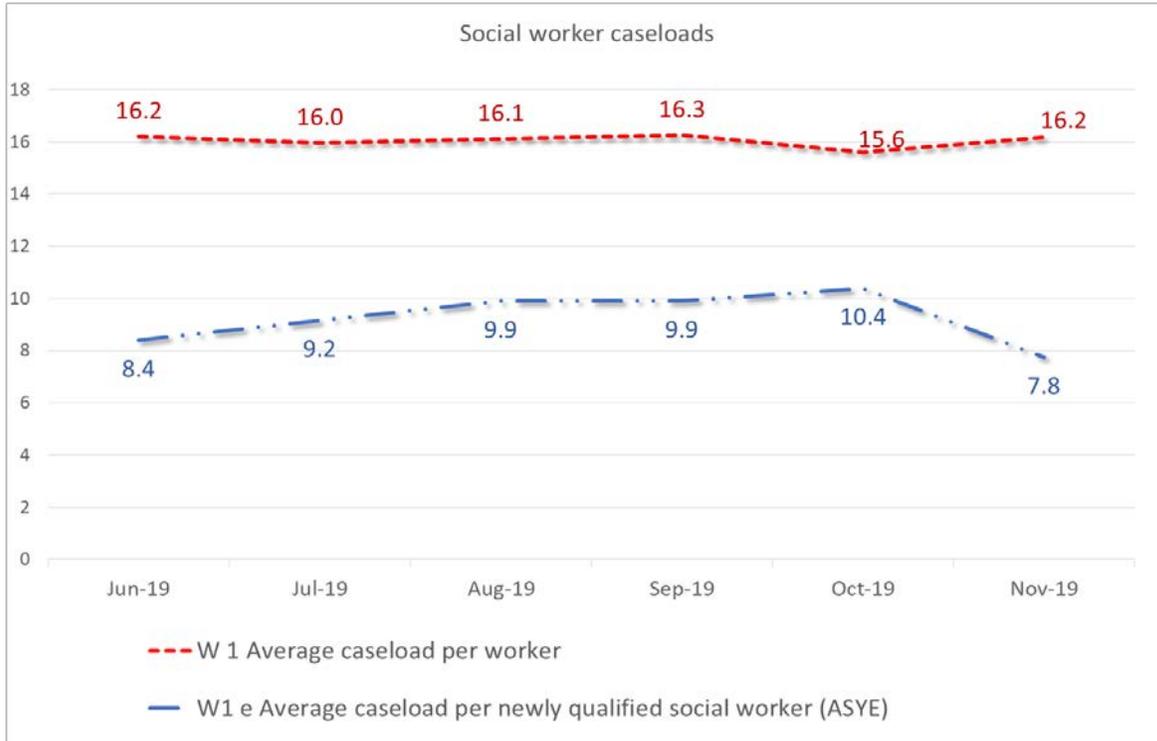
- 91% of CIN reviews were completed on time (an improvement but still under target of 95%)
- 85% of CIN plans are up-to-date, an improvement of 17% compared to Oct 19 – a large in month improvement from a consistently low base
- 90% of Initial Health Assessments were completed within 20 working days of entering care a 44% improvement on October 19
- 85% of CLA in care for 12 + months had their review Health Assessment – performance is consistently at this level but remains below target
- Responses to missing children and young people have improved with more RHI's, risk assessments and exploitation episodes taking place

THINGS TO DO BETTER

- 76% of CIN visits were completed within timescale
- Timeliness of CLA Care (81%) and Pathway (76%) planning remains below the 95% target
- Timeliness of Foster Carer reviews (83%) and visits (77%) remains below target
- Timeliness of Supervision across is below target for all cases – CP (65%), CLA, CIN (82%) and Assessments/Care Leavers (87%)

Going well or better – 6 month trends

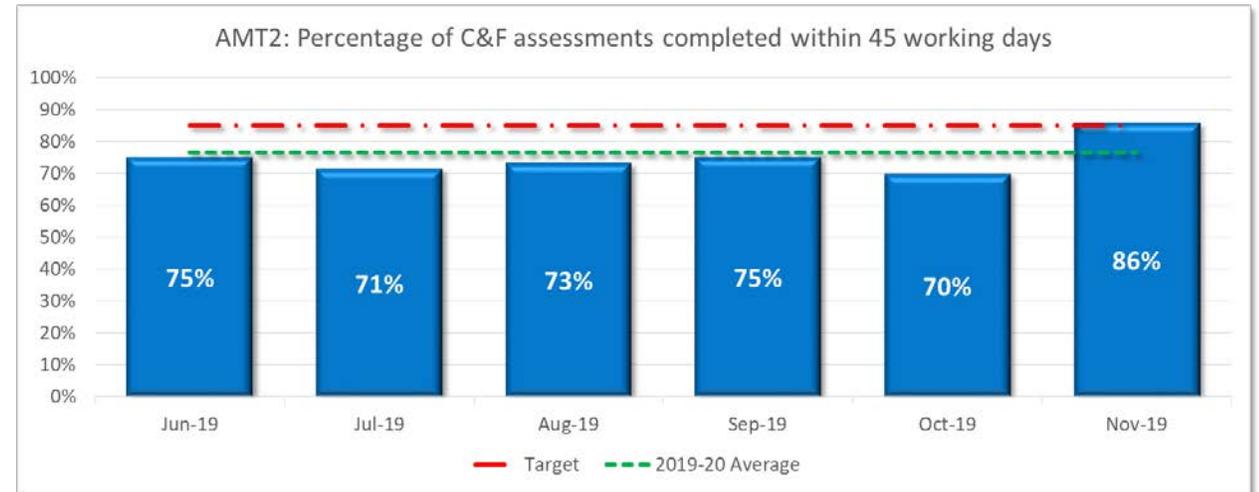
Average caseloads



It is positive to see that average caseloads across the service have remained below target since June 19. This is due to a variety of factors including a significant investment in more frontline staff and managers across the service and reduction in the numbers of children on CIN and CP plans. The service has also been able to keep caseloads low for newly qualified staff.

Within this period average caseloads in the newer 'adolescent support teams' fell from a high of 25 on average as more staff started. Currently the only service area reporting average caseloads above 17 is leaving care, which has an average target of 25.

Assessment timeliness



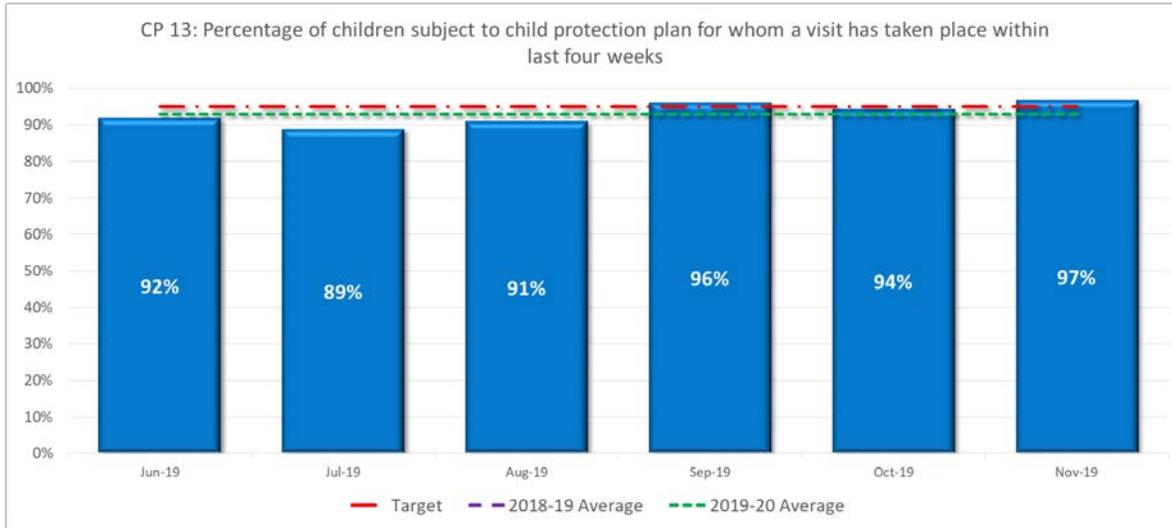
Assessment timeliness reporting has fluctuated over the past year, with an upward trend in the 6 months prior to Jun 19, performance remaining relatively static from Jun – Oct 19 and an increase in timeliness again in Nov 19 (over target of 85%).

It should be noted that this data covers all C&F assessments conducted across the service, including those carried out on open cases, although performance around timeliness of initial C&F assessments within the assessment service has also improved (weekly snapshot data).

The challenge going forward is to sustain performance while focusing on quality and working more closely with partners through the Single Point of Contact to ensure all families are supported at the right time and at the right level of service (e.g. where a C&F assessment is not necessary).

Going well or better – 6 month trends

Child protection visits

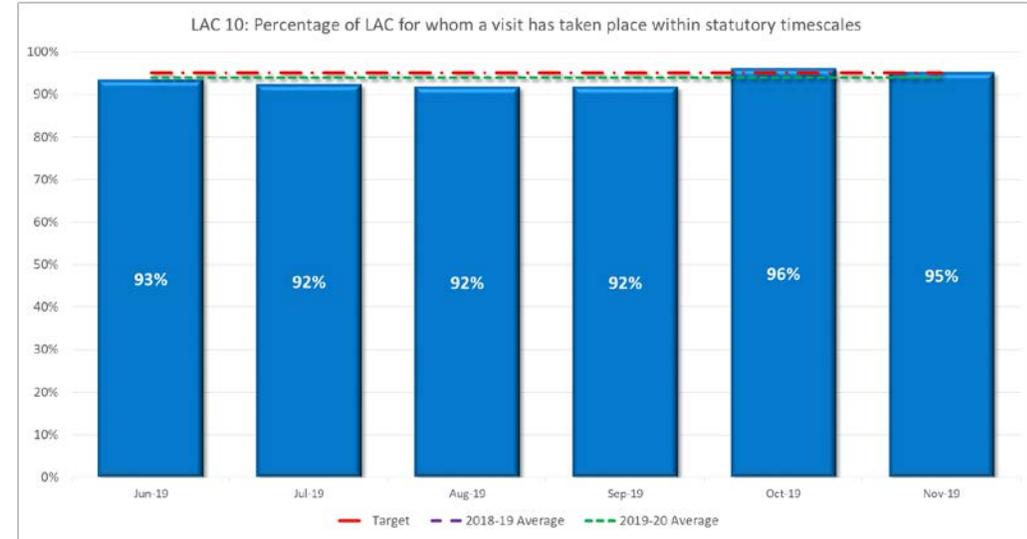


It is positive to see that children who are subject to child protection plans have been visited with increasing frequency over the past 6 months, to be above target in Sep and Nov 19 and that performance has been sustained at over 90% since August 19.

This improvement can be explained by a variety of factors including more staff, lower average caseloads, improved recording practices and the impact of new leadership at Head of Service and Service Manager level. Expectations have also been raised for children to be seen every 10 days (over and above statutory minimum of 20 days).

The challenge is now for the service to sustain performance, whilst focusing on improving the quality of all visits and making them more purposeful through better direct work with children and young people.

Visits to children in our care



The timeliness of visits to children in our care has been on an upward trajectory since Oct 18, and it is positive to see that performance of over 90% has been sustained over the last 6 months, and was on target in Nov 19.

This improvement can be explained by a variety of factors including improved recording practices and new leadership at team and service manager level.

As with CP visits, the challenge going forward for social workers and social care managers is to balance quality with compliance and spend more time planning visits to ensure that they are purposeful and the voices of children in our care are heard, understood and inform plans for children. This is being measured via dip sampling and audit work.

Ones to watch – 6 month trends

CIN reviews

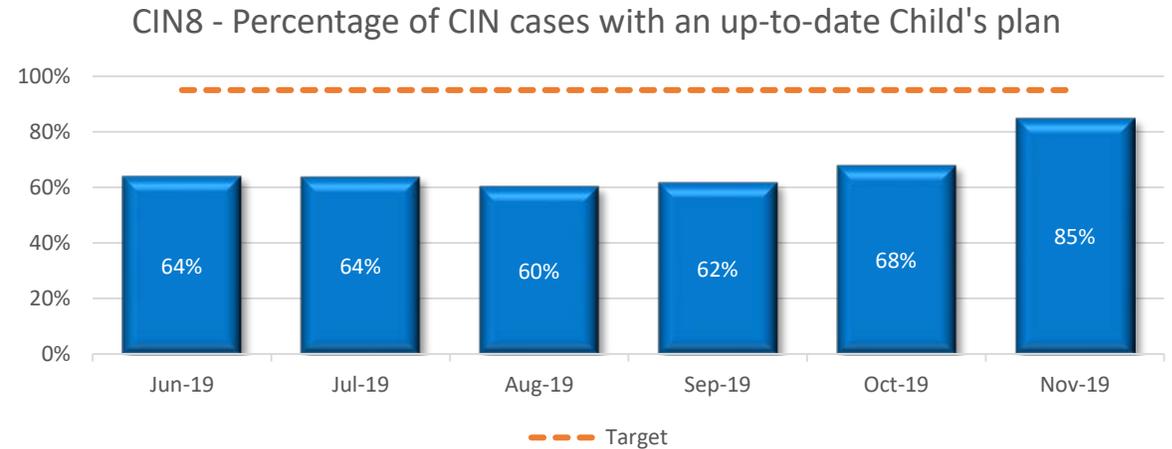


The timeliness of child in need (CIN) reviews has fluctuated over the past 6 months and requires a continued focus in order to achieved sustained improvement.

It should be noted that the number of children subject to CIN plans (excluding children with disabilities) has declined significantly since July 2018 (808 in Jul 18 down to 578 Nov 19) which may explain a more recent uptick in performance as workloads reduce. There has also been weekly reviews of CIN performance amongst managers in Social Work with Families (SWwF) service to drive up performance.

The number of step downs from SWwF to Early Help as also increased in this period meaning that families are being supported at a lower level where it is safe to do so.

CIN plans up to date



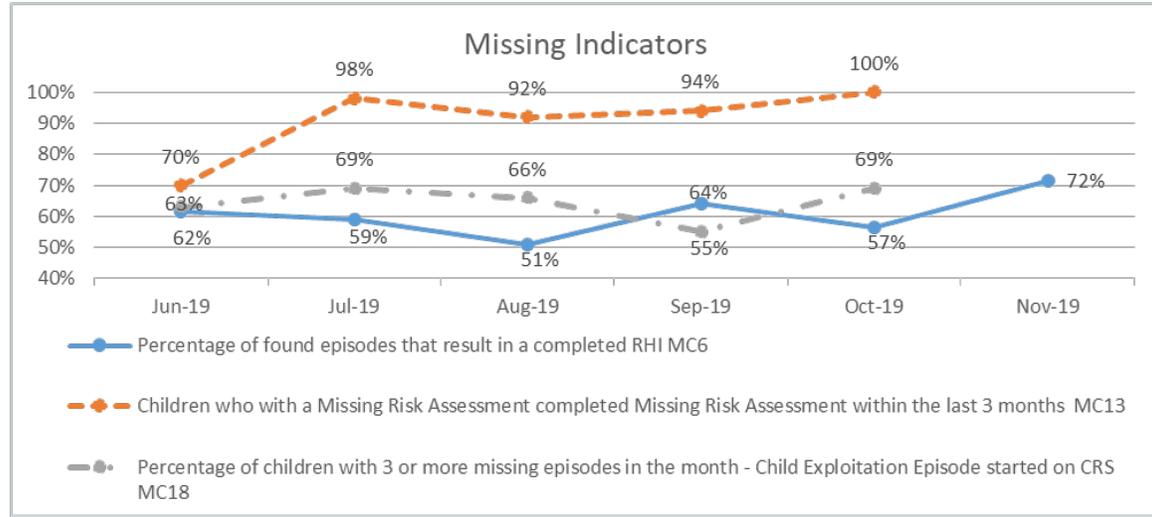
Regularly updating Child in Need Plans has been an area of underperformance for some time, however there was an increase in timeliness around this indicator in Nov 19.

Historically there has been disconnect between CIN reviews and plans being updating in a timely manner, however weekly reviews of CIN performance amongst managers in SWwF, led by the Head of Service are now in place, which may explain the recent improvement in performance.

Nevertheless a sustained focus on child in need work (CIN) both in terms if timeliness and quality is needed across the service to ensure sustained performance across visits, reviews and planning.

Ones to watch – 6 month trends

Missing children and young people

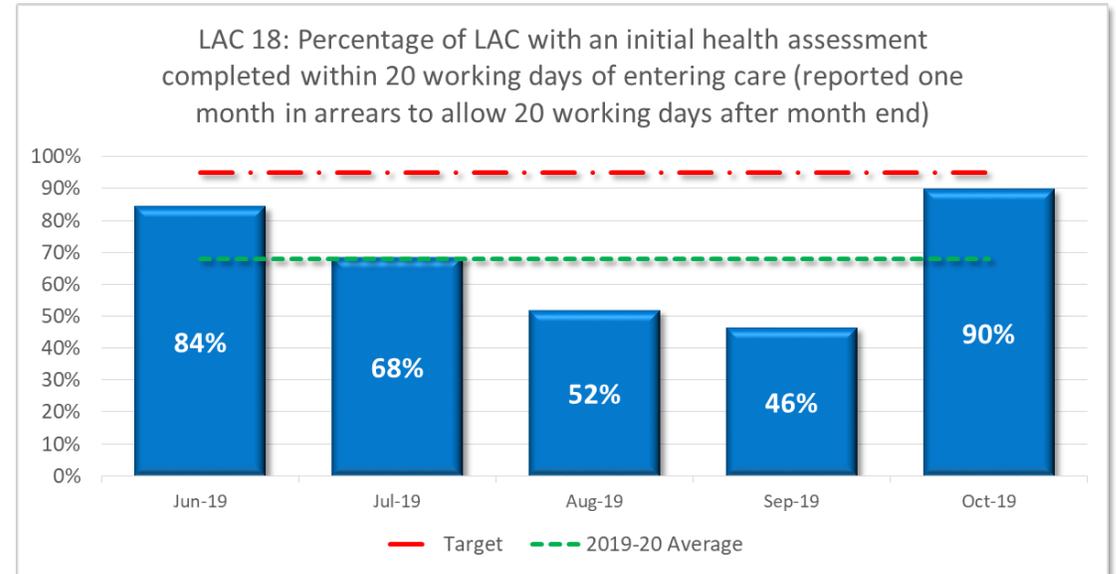


Missing children is still an area which the service is monitoring closely in order to drive up performance and improve reporting. It is positive that some indicators have seen improvement in the last 6 months as awareness grows, for example;

- the % of missing episodes that result in a return home interview (RHI) being conducted (blue line above)
- The % of children with 3 + episodes where a risk assessment was completed (orange line above)
- The % of children with 3 + missing episodes discussed at complex adolescent panel (grey line above)

However, there are still a small but significant number of children looked after who are going missing regularly and more needs to be done (e.g. through targeted interventions) to better understand and respond to each young person in order to identify and reduce any risks they face.

CLA health assessment timeliness



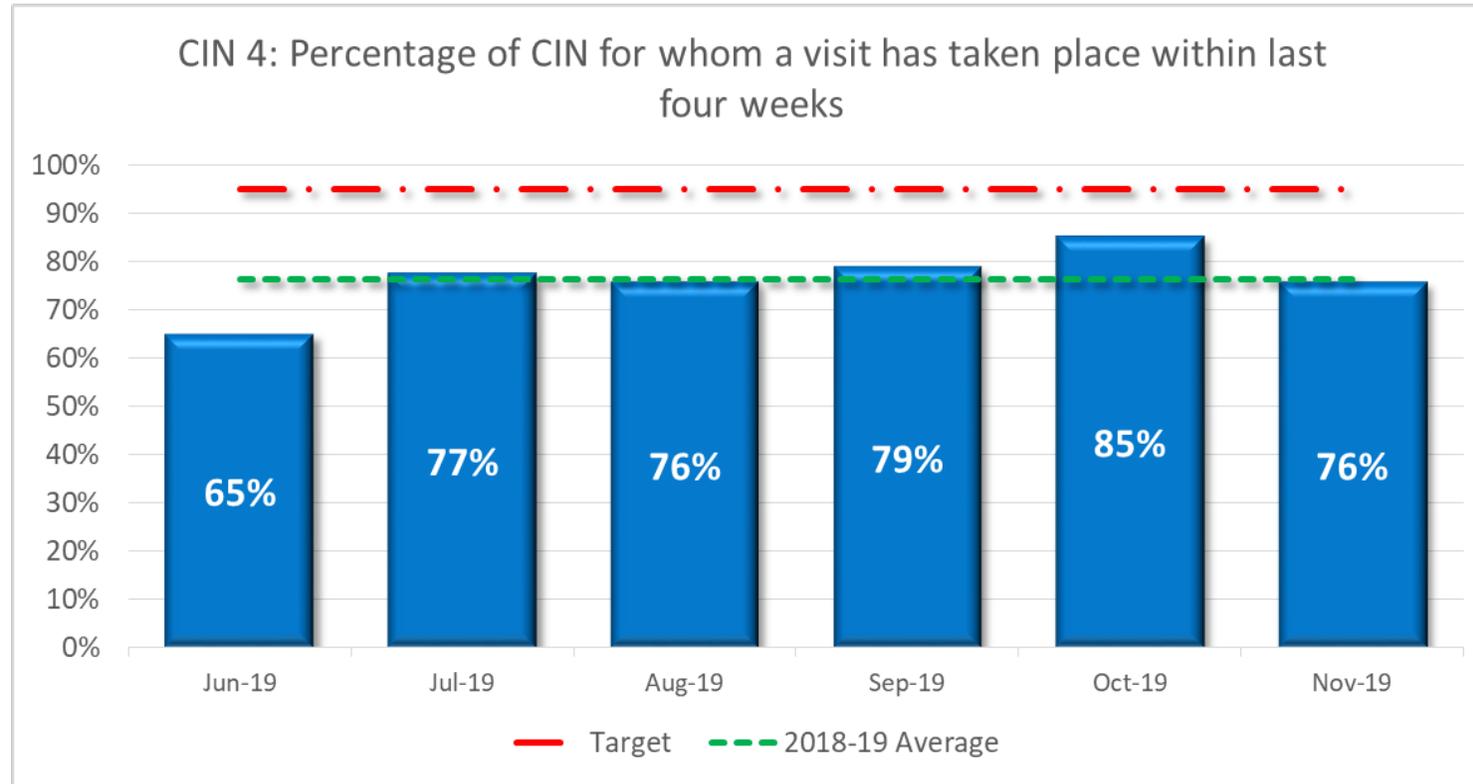
The timeliness of initial health assessments (IHA's) for our children looked after has fluctuated significantly over the past 6 months* due to clunky notification and recording practices across children's social care and health. Additional administrative capacity has also been put in place to speed up notifications.

Plans are in place to address these issues across the partnership, and there are strategic and operational groups which monitor performance across all CLA health indicators closely as a number of other health indicators are also below targets (review assessments, immunisations and dental checks).

*It should be noted that data for November was not available at time of writing.

Things to do better – 6 months trends

CIN visits



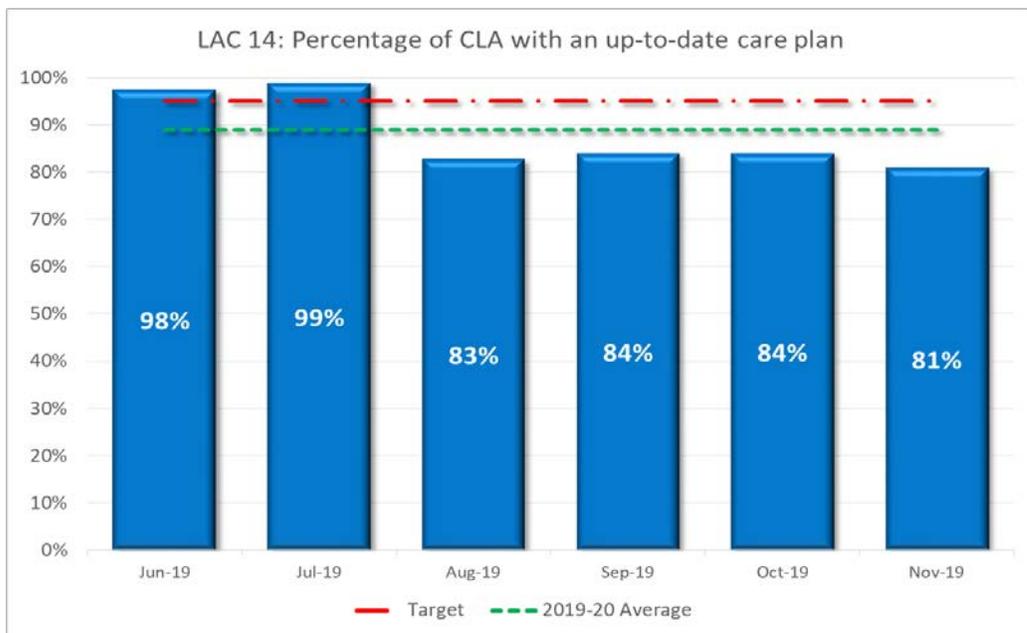
Although there has been a historic upward trend in CIN visit timeliness from a low base, progress has slowed over last 6 months and on analysis there is little discrepancy in performance by service area (e.g. SWwF and CWD)

Underperformance in comparison with other visit figures (for CP and CLA) is partially due to higher risk work (e.g. CP and court) being prioritised, however weekly CIN performance monitoring from the Head of Service and Service Managers is in place to drive up performance across all CIN indicators and improve practice.

The declining number of children subject to CIN plans may also serve to improve performance across CIN indicators.

Things to do better – 6 months trends

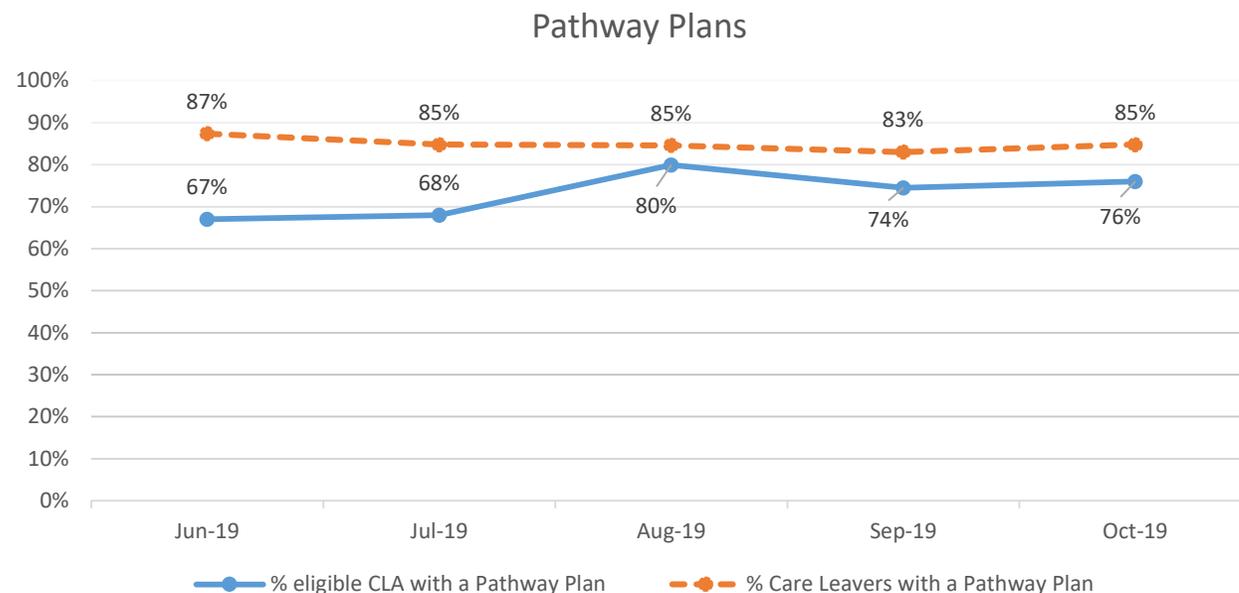
Up to date plans for CLA



Although 93% of CLA had their plans reviewed in timescales in Nov 19, the data above shows that plans are not always being updated in a timely fashion after reviews and that performance in this area has declined.

Managers in the service have challenged the quality of work more, including ensuring plans are smarter and more of them are influenced by the voice of children and young people. Robust performance management activity is underway to raise standards across Social Work with CLA,

Pathway plans

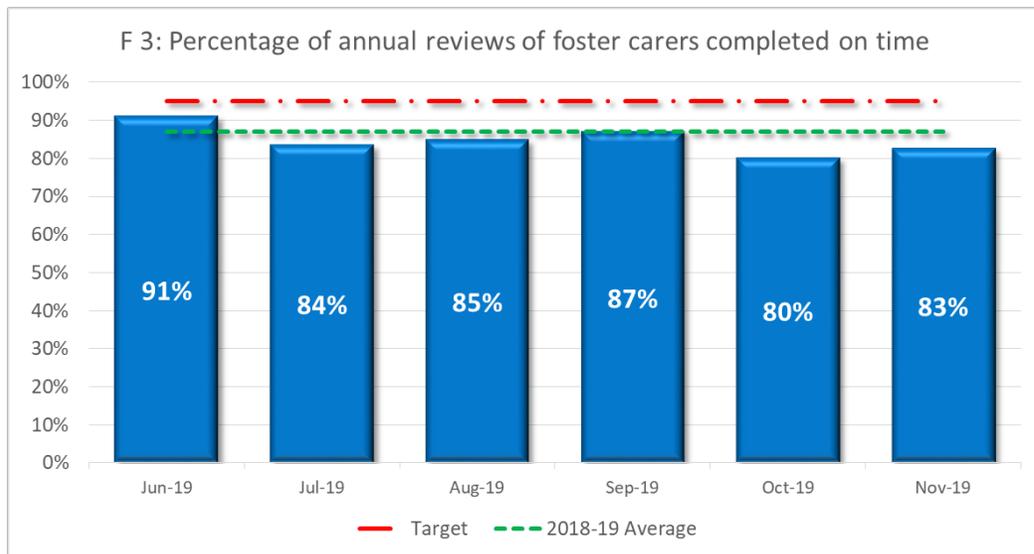


Pathway planning for older children in our care (blue line) has improved steadily over the past 12 months from a low base, but is still below target and activity to improve transition planning for older children in our care across the service is underway (including systems training and performance monitoring).

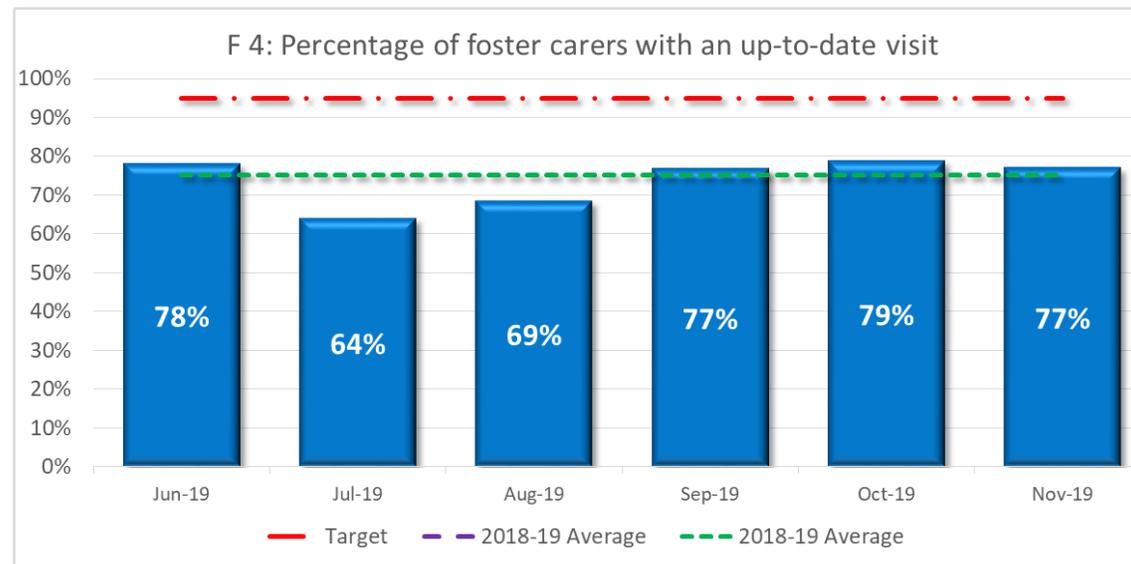
Performance for care leavers (orange line) will never be 100% as not all care leavers are in touch with the council, it has remained at over 80 % for the past 6 months.

Things to do better – 6 months trends

Fostering reviews



Fostering visits



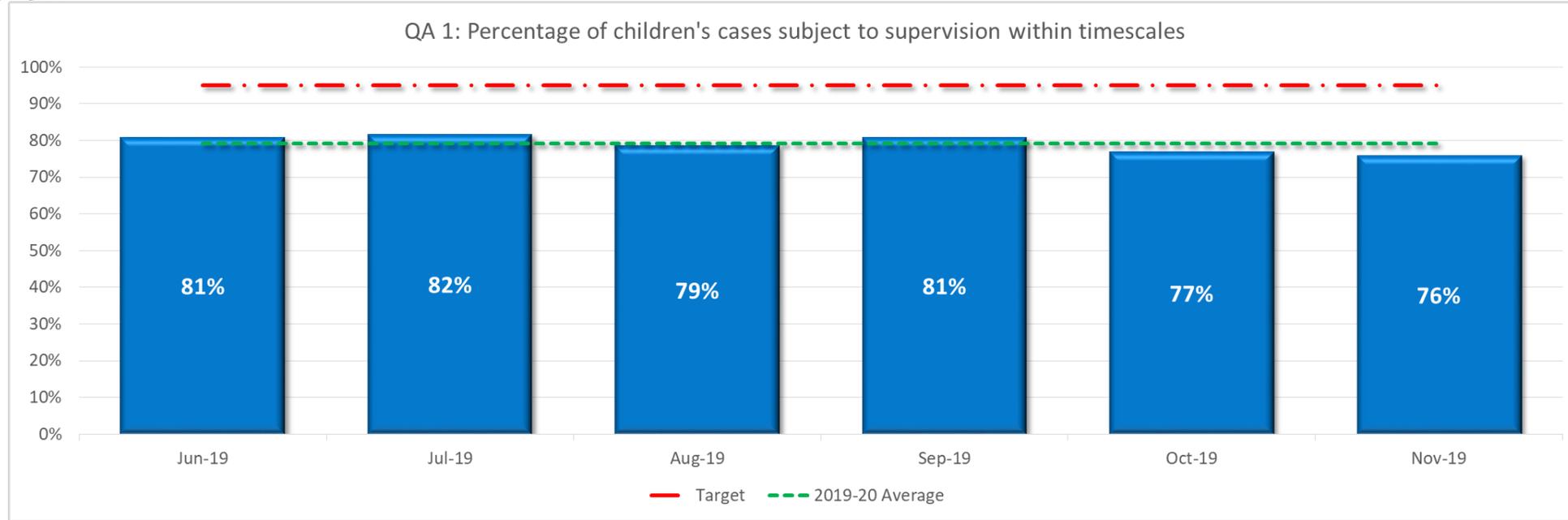
Performance around fostering annual review timeliness has declined slightly since Jun 19 and remains under target. Although performance around visiting has improved in the last six months it is still significantly under target.

A review of the fostering service has been completed and a new acting Service Lead (starting Nov 19) is delivering improvement activity to drive up quality and timeliness around key areas of practice, including timely reviews and visits.

Improving the fostering service to provide high challenge and high support to our foster carers is a key service priority for 2020, and themed 'deep dive' discussion on the service took place at the Children's Improvement Board in December 2019.

Things to do better – 6 months trends

Supervision



After supervision expectations were altered in December 18, to a more risk based model (set out on this slide) performance across all types of cases improved from a low of 72% in January 2019 to over 80%. However, there has not been a sustained improvement in the last 6 months towards the target of 95%.

Looking at the largest service areas; performance in SWwF was slightly better in November than that in SWwCLA, despite expectations around CP supervision timeliness being stricter. Supervision performance is closely monitored by all Heads of Service and the Director in order to improve performance consistently. However, it is also important to ensure that the quality of supervision improves to be more analytical and reflective, which is a significant challenge for team managers.

Supervision policy

All frontline workers should be supervised at least once per month and supervision recorded on children's casefiles as per the below frequency;

- Child protection At least once per month
- Child in Need At least once every two months
- Early Help At least once every two months
- Looked after At least once every two months
- Care leavers (18+) At least once every 3 months