

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Scrutiny Report Template

Committee:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date:	03.06.19
Subject:	Quarterly Monitoring of Children & Families Services Improvements
Purpose of Report:	Report on progress in implementing the Service Development Plan
Scrutiny Chair:	Councillor Aled Morris Jones
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Llinos Medi
Head of Service:	Fôn Roberts, Head of Children and Families Services
Report Author:	Elin Williams, Children & Families Services Transformation Programme Manager
Tel:	01248 751813
Email:	ElinWilliams@ynysmon.gov.uk
Local Members:	Relevant to all Members

1 - Recommendation/s

The Committee is requested to:

- 1.1. Confirm that the Committee is satisfied with the pace of progress and improvements made to date within Children & Families Services.

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

There are clear links from the Service Development Plan within Children and Families Services and the Isle of Anglesey Plan 2017/2022. The objectives are:

1. Ensure that the people of Anglesey can thrive and realize their long-term potential.
2. Support vulnerable adults and families to keep them safe, healthy and as independent as possible.
3. Work in partnership to ensure that they can cope effectively with change and developments whilst protecting our natural environment.

3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

The following set of guiding principles will assist Members to scrutinise this subject matter:

- 3.1 The customer/citizen [looking at plans and proposals from the point of view of local people]
- 3.2 Value [looking at whether plans and proposals are economic, efficient & effective. Also, looking at the wider requirements of community benefits]
- 3.3 Risk [Look at plans & proposals from the point of view of resilience and service transformation. It is about the transition from a traditional service to a transformed one, and about the robustness of the transformed service once it is in place]
- 3.4 Focus on the system (including organisational development) [Ensuring that the Council & its partners have the systems in place to ensure that they can implement

transformation smoothly, efficiently and without having a negative effect on service delivery]

3.5 Focus on performance and quality [Scrutiny undertaking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role, on an exception basis]

3.6 Focus on Wellbeing [Looking at plans and proposals from the perspective of the Wellbeing of Future Generations requirements]

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

1. Is the Committee satisfied with the pace of progress and improvements made to date within Children and Families Services?

5 – Background / Context

Background

As Elected Members you are fully aware of the background regarding the Service Improvement Plan and that this was regularly reviewed by the Children's Services Improvement Panel. Following the recent re-inspection of the service by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), the service is now working to a new Service Development Plan that is replacing the previous Service Improvement Plan.

The Service Development Plan is a 3 year plan and consists of the following 5 themes:

1. A confident and competent workforce to provide a consistent and effective service;
2. Quality and timely assessments, care planning, interventions and decision making to protect, support and manage the risks for children: good quality chronologies, record keeping and research evidence and tools;
3. Quality assurance and performance framework that supports the local authority in effectively managing its responsibilities towards children;
4. Appropriate social work intervention 'at the right time' in order to enhance family life and support families at times of trauma;
5. Improve outcomes for children in care.

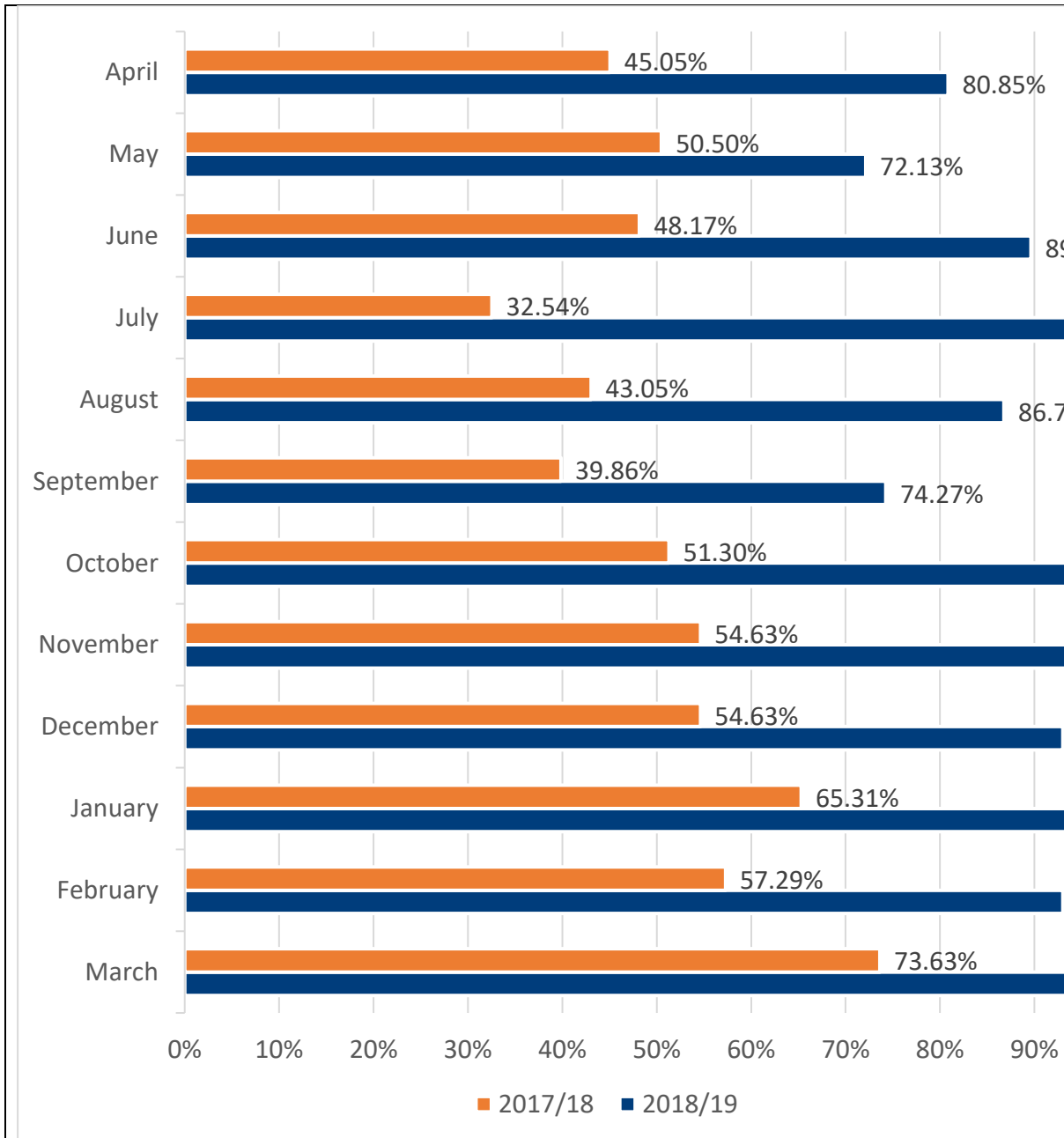
The service is enthusiastic about its Service Development Plan moving forward.

Since the last report the focus of the work within the Children & Families Services has been:

1. Performance

A marked improvement can be seen within the Quarter 4 Performance Indicators (PIs) within the service. Performance has continued to improve within most areas that are measured which is an indicator of the positive changes and developments that are happening within the service as a whole.

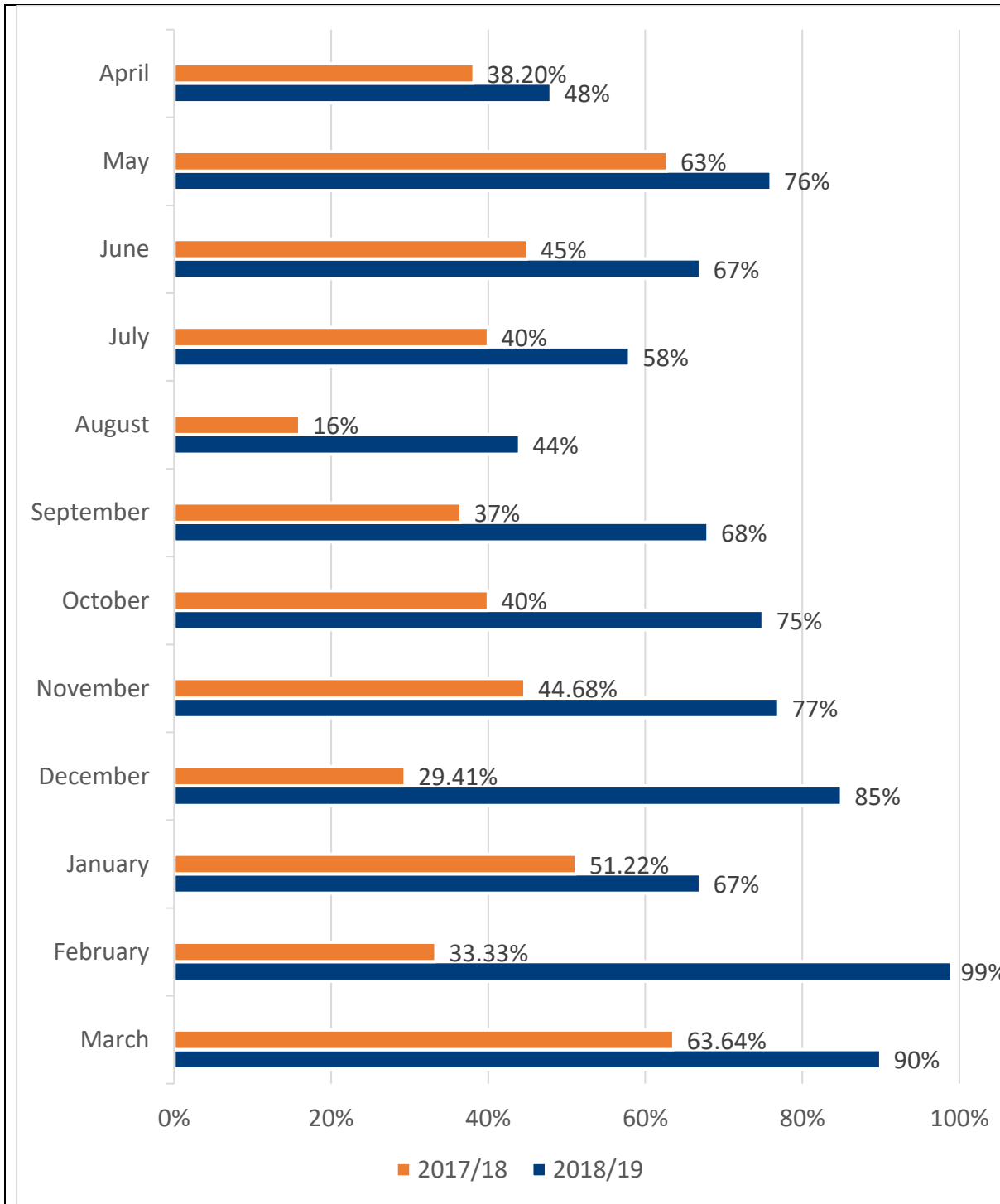
1.1. Child Protection Statutory Visits



This Performance Indicator measures the number of Child Protection Statutory Visits held within timescale.

Quarter four is the best quarter of the year with a score of **96.69%** (17 missed out of 514). We missed **185** visits for the year which is **660** less than the previous year. This is a significant improvement. The end of year score is **89.80%**.

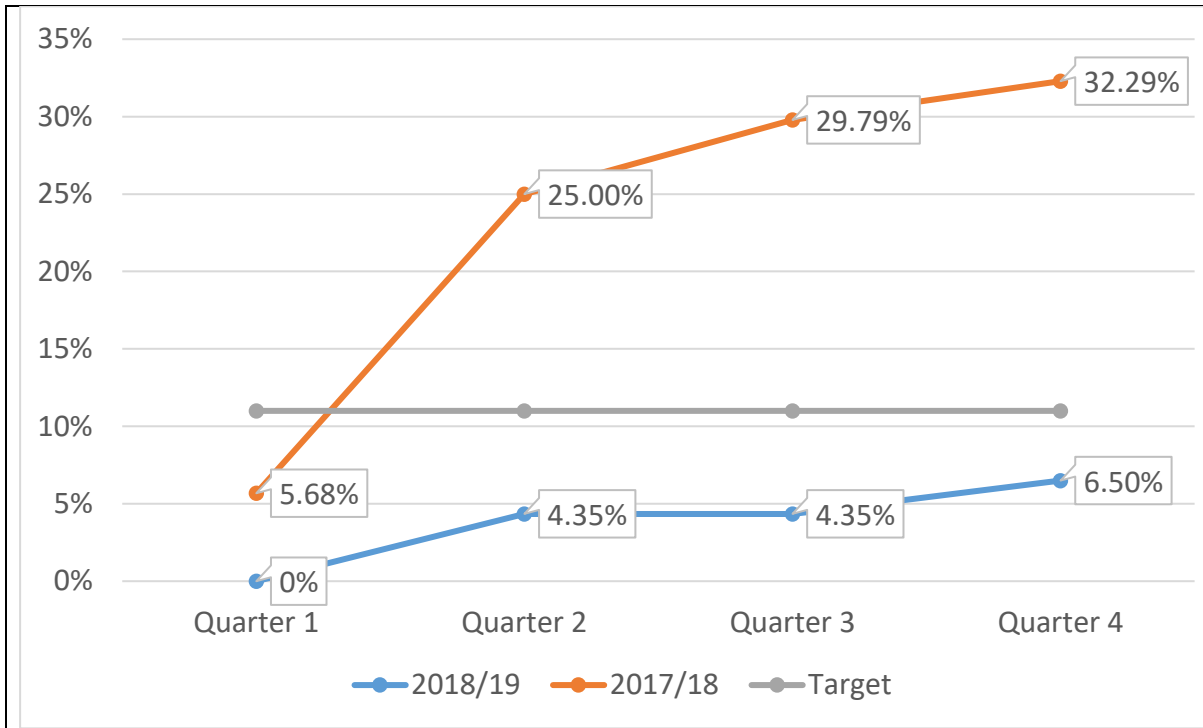
1.2. Child Protection Core Groups



This Performance Indicator measures the number of Child Protection Core Groups held within timescale.

This PI has continued to improve since August and has significantly improved in the last two months with **99%** being achieved in February. This is very encouraging and the service is aiming to achieve **100%** going forward.

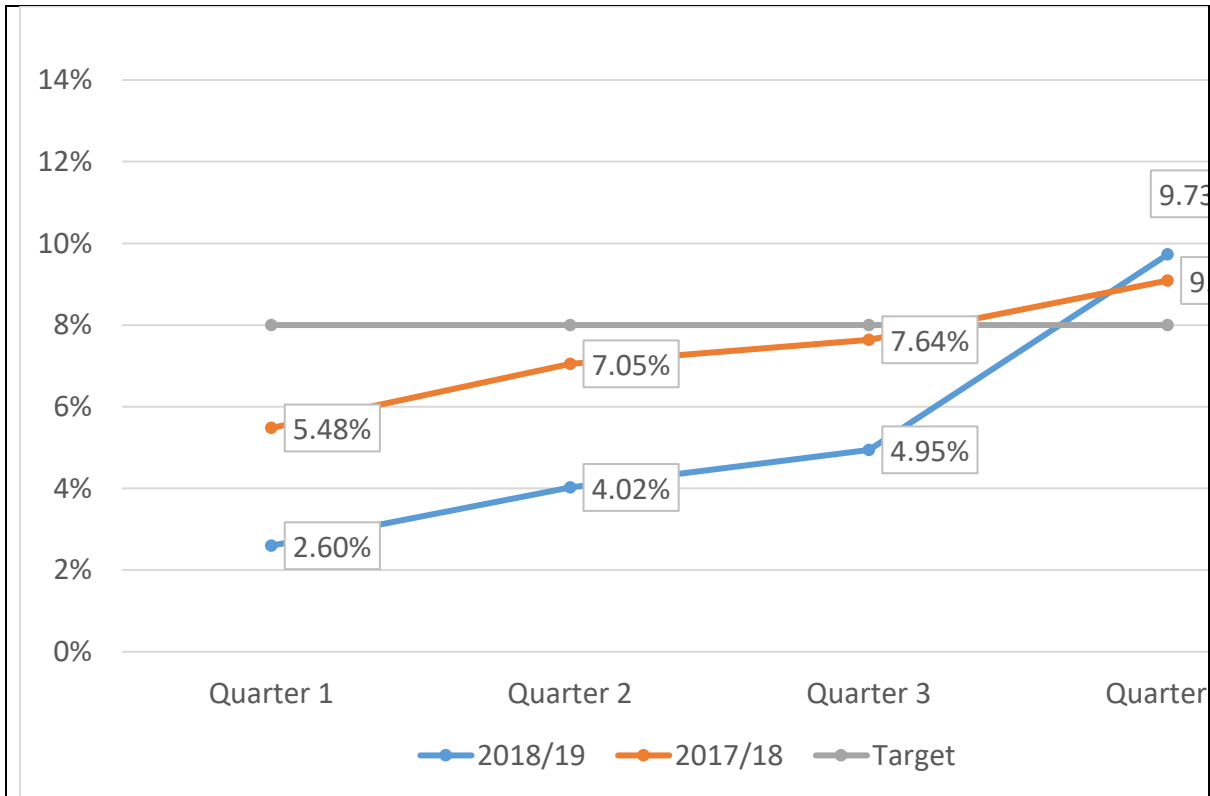
1.3. Children that have Changed School due to Change in Placement



This Performance Indicator measures the number of looked after children in school that have changed school for non-transitional reasons.

Last year nearly a **third** of school aged children had to change school for non-transitional reasons with **19** in September alone which was its highest in at least 5 years. In 2016/17 and 2015/16 we were **17%** respectively so this year's figure (**6.50%**) is significantly lower and is below the target level.

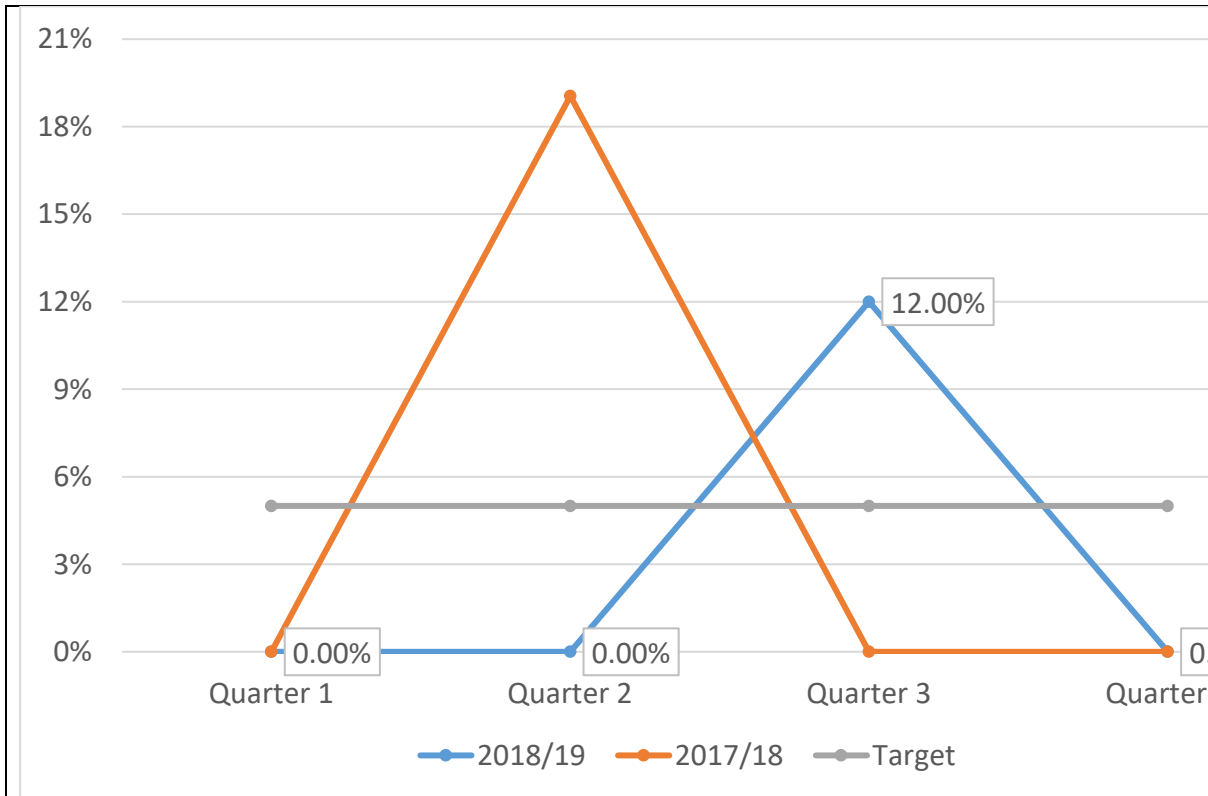
1.4. Looked After Children Returned Home



This Performance Indicator measures the number of children returned home.

We had a high number of children return home in quarter 4 which is an improvement on last year with **9.73%** this year compared to **9.09%** last year.

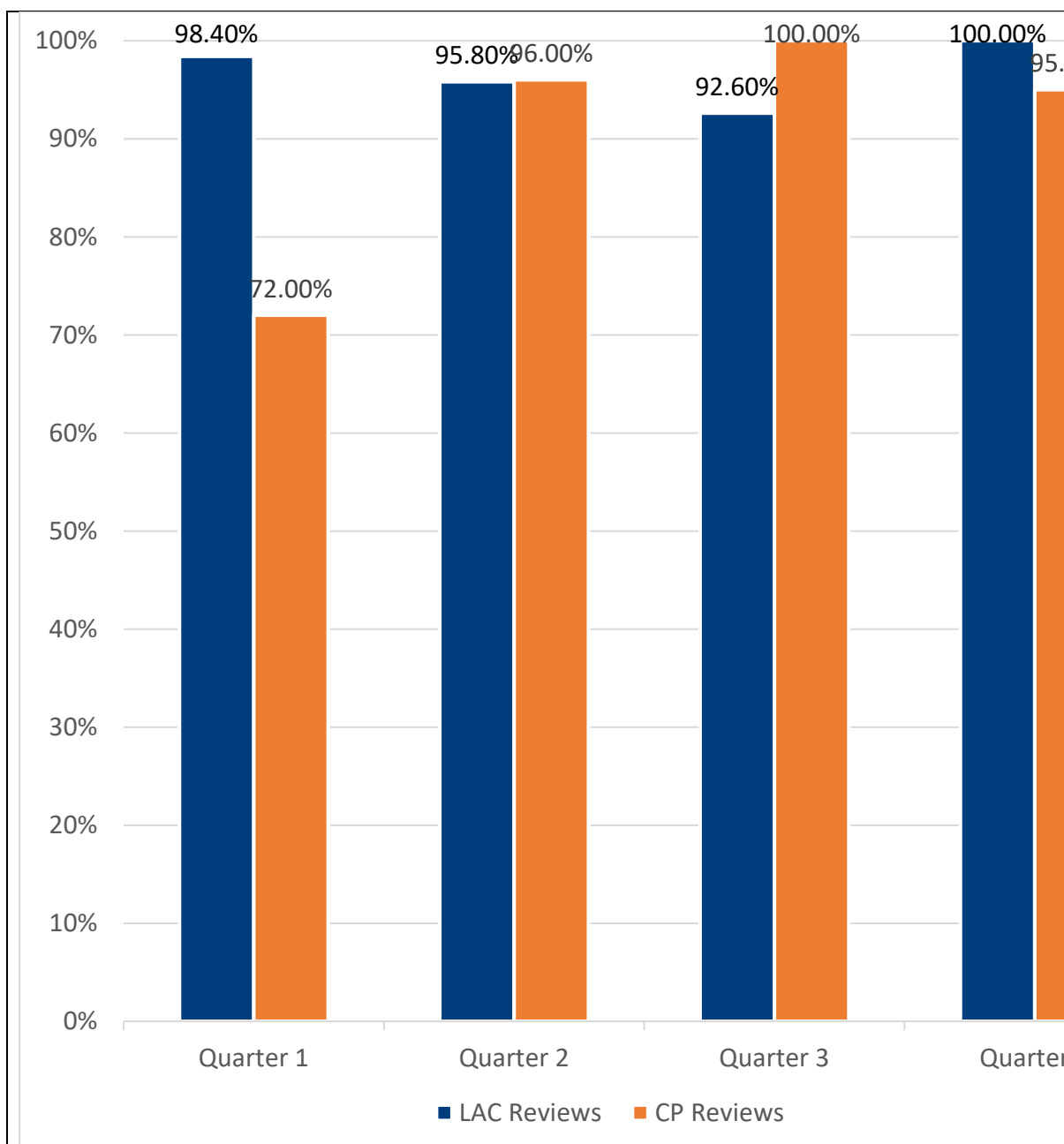
1.5. Children Re-Registered within 12 Months



This Performance Indicator measures the number of children that have re-registered within 12 months.

There is an improvement compared to the previous year. This year the service had **122** registrations and of the 122 only **3** had re-registered within 12 months with this being one family. The final score for this year was **2.46%**.

1.6. Child Protection & LAC Reviews



This Performance Indicator measures the number of LAC reviews and child protection reviews held within timescale.

Performance relating to reviews has been good this year despite a low score in quarter 1 in child protection reviews. The rest of the year has been very consistent with the highlight being in quarter 3 achieving **100%** in child protection reviews and in quarter 4 achieving **100%** in LAC reviews. This is very encouraging.

The service continues to strive to achieve the best outcomes possible against all Performance Indicators.

2. Complaints and Positive Comments

The following is a summary of the complaints and positive comments received for Children & Families Services for Quarter 4:

- There was a decrease in the number of Stage 1 complaints logged (**3** during the quarter).
- There were **10** concerns / negative comments logged during the quarter.
- **12** compliments were logged during the quarter. The **7** compliments from families show gratitude for the way the service has benefitted families and how workers have developed positive relationships with children. The **5** compliments from professionals show positive views of the involvement of social workers in cases where there were court proceedings, and appreciated how a clear, high quality child protection plan helped parents make changes.

The following provides an overview of the number of complaints and positive comments received for Children & Families Services for the 2018-19 financial year:

There were **30** Stage 1 complaints, **2** Stage 2 complaints and **0** Ombudsman investigations.

The **68** compliments received show appreciation of:

- the way staff communicate and listen;
- support received and the difference this has made to families, including causing confidence to increase;
- staff behaving in a professional, knowledgeable and efficient manner;
- positive relationships formed with service users, including children.

It is positive to see that there was a decrease in the number of Stage 1 complaints during Quarter 4 and that there are a number of compliments and positive comments.

3. Aftercare Policies

The Aftercare Service has recently produced new policies relating to young people who have left the service. The following three policies have been approved and are implemented:

- Joint Protocol for the Young People and Care Leavers of Anglesey between Housing Services and Children & Families Services;
- Leaving Care Policy;
- Young Person's Guide to Financial Help & Support.

The policies provide guidance regarding what support is available to young people who are leaving care or have left care in terms of finances and benefits; housing and accommodation; roles and responsibilities; education, employment and training; health and well-being and keeping in contact with the service.

4. Pocket Money, Bank Account and Savings Policy for Looked After Children

A new policy regarding financial matters for looked after children has been created following consultation with Môn Foster Carers, Independent Providers and other local authority Fostering Agencies. The policy provides a clear direction as to the expectation of the local authority in terms of pocket money, bank accounts, savings and Junior ISA for looked after children.

5. Fostering Package

The Council is now offering a more competitive package in terms of allowances and benefits to support with the recruitment of more Foster Carers to the Council.

The package includes:

- A 10% increase in the Foster Allowance;
- A 50% discount in Council Tax;
- Free Isle of Anglesey Leisure Services Membership Card;
- Free Council car parking ticket.

Since the announcement of the new fostering package in January 2019, **15** have enquired and have shown an interest in becoming Foster Carers for the Council; **12** have started on the assessment process, and **3** have been approved as Foster Carers by the Fostering Panel. An on-going marketing campaign is in place to continue with recruitment of Foster Carers to ensure there is a sufficient number of local foster placements for local children.

6. Social Services Improvement Panel

At the Adults Social Care Transformation Board on 22nd May 2019 and the Children and Families Service Improvement Panel on 23rd May 2019 it was recommended to establish a Social Services Improvement Panel. This would enable the Adult Services to have the same level of scrutiny as the Children and Families Services has had in recent years. It would also allow Elected Members to have more detailed knowledge of the processes and challenges within Adult Services. It is recommended that the newly constituted panel commences on its work with immediate effect. The next scheduled meeting will therefore be the new meeting of the Social Services Improvement Panel which is the 27th June 2019.

6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]

Not applicable.

7 – Financial Implications

The Head of Service continues to scrutinise all contracts and will at times challenge costs in particular to looked after children provision. An effort is also made to reduce spending across the service and this in turn has reduced the projected overspend to date.

8 – Appendices:**9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):**