

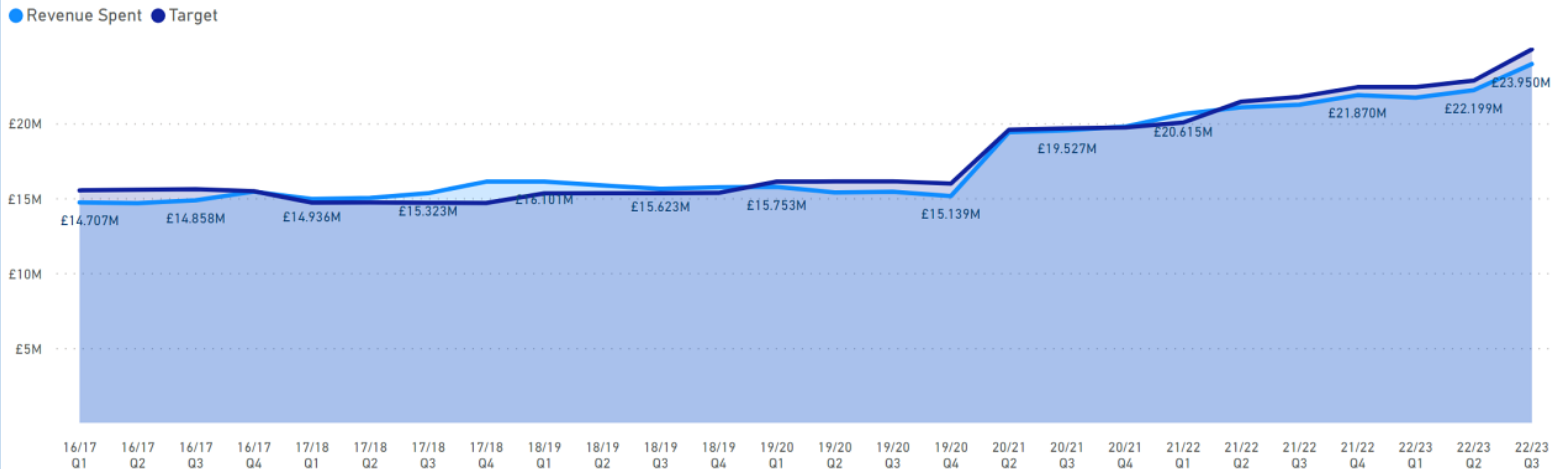


# Children's Services, Partnership and Communities Performance Report 2022/23

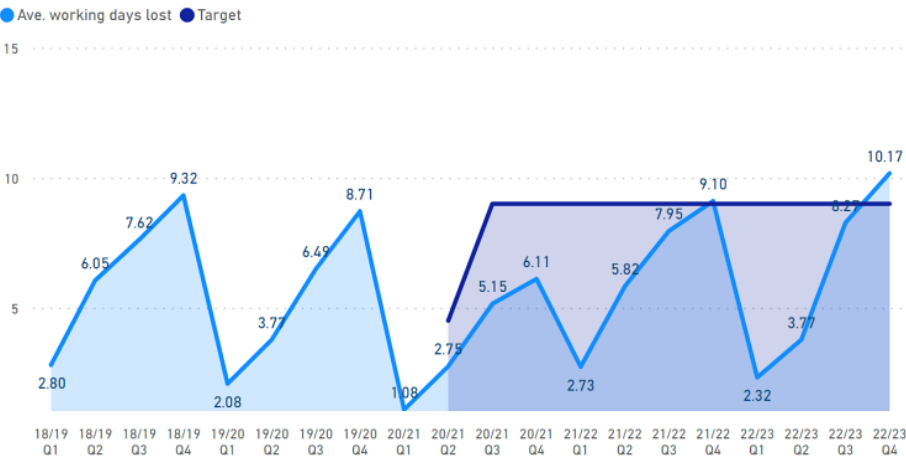
## 01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes



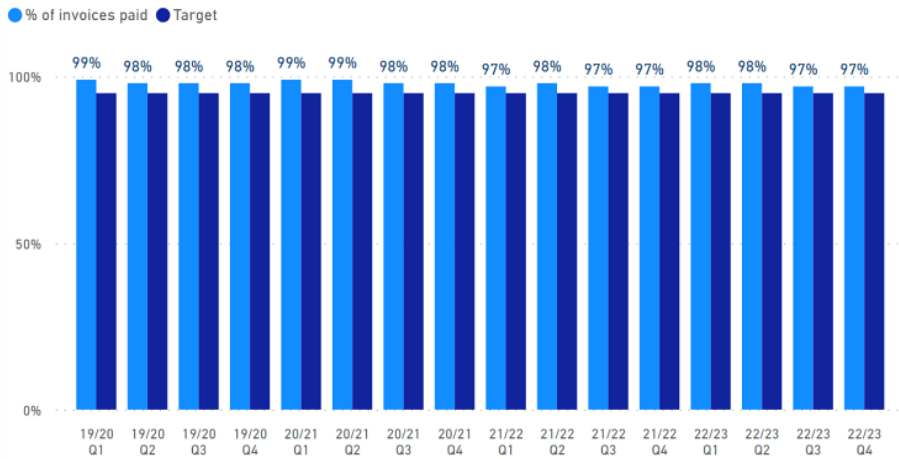
### CS. SPS0.01 Performance against revenue budget



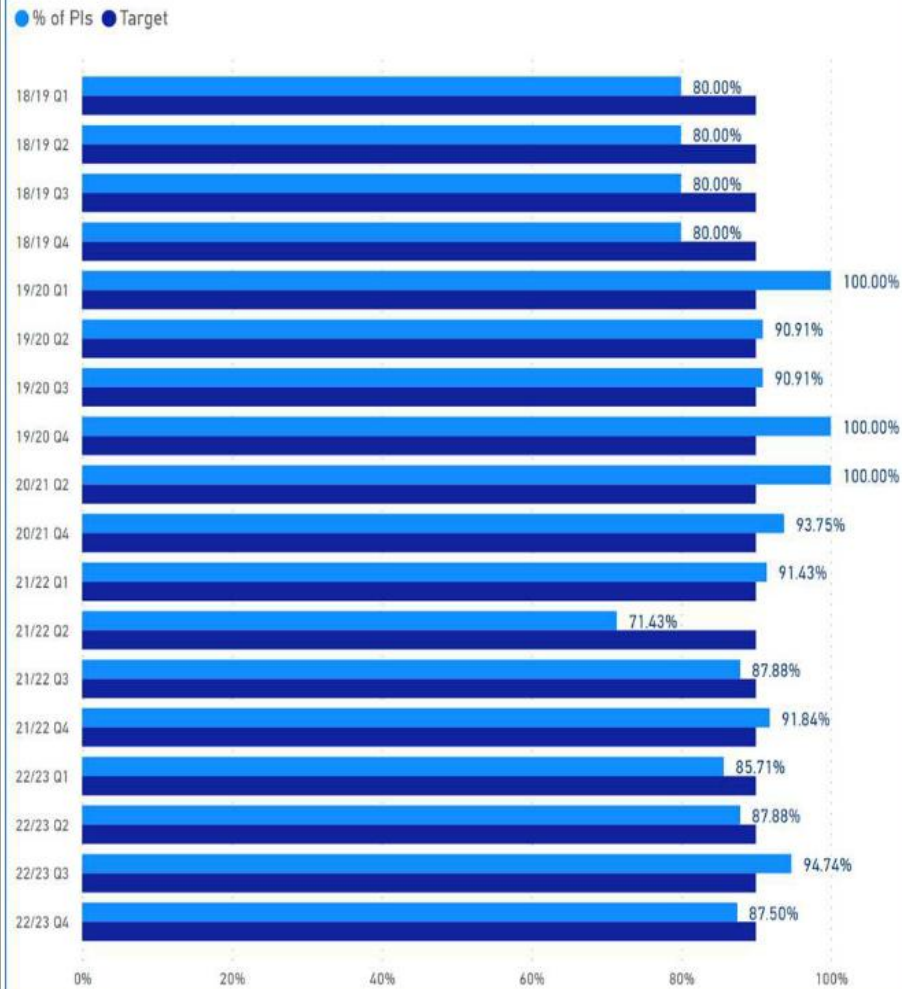
### CS.MPI.02 Average working days lost due to sickness absence



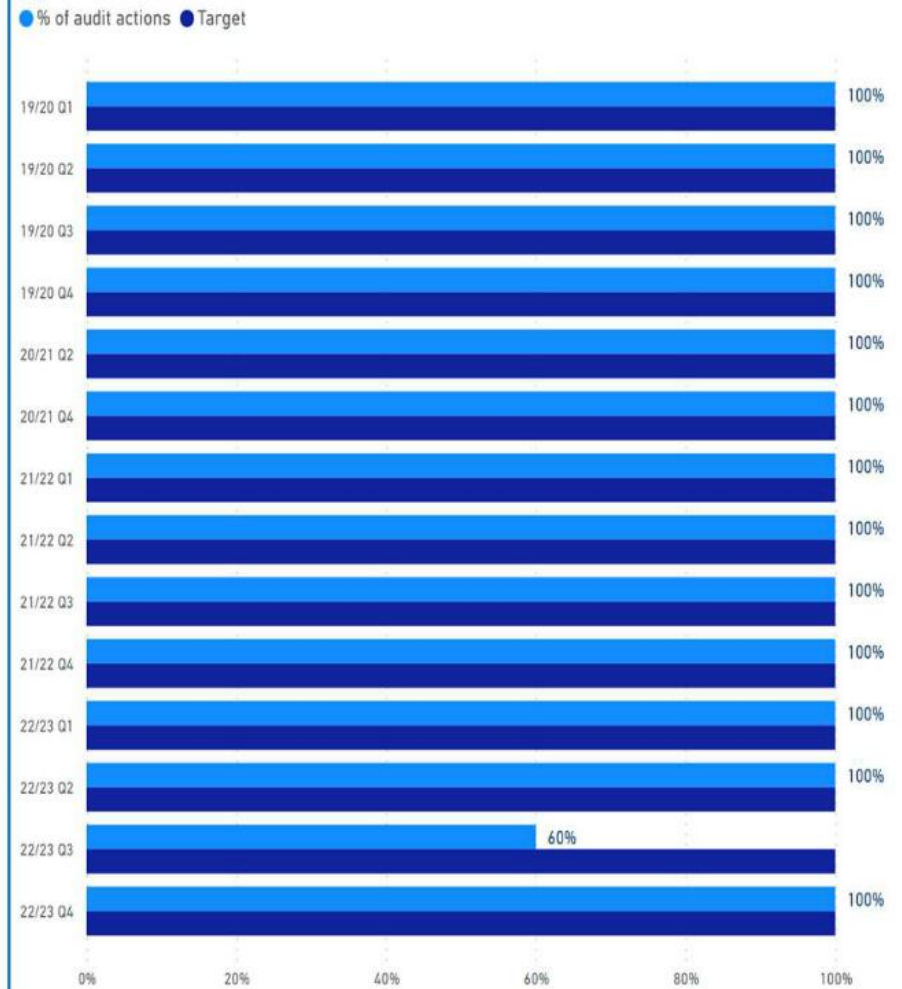
### CS. MPI.04 % of Invoices paid within 30 days



CS. MPI.05 % of PIs on target



CSPC. MPI.07 % of internal/external audit actions on target or complete

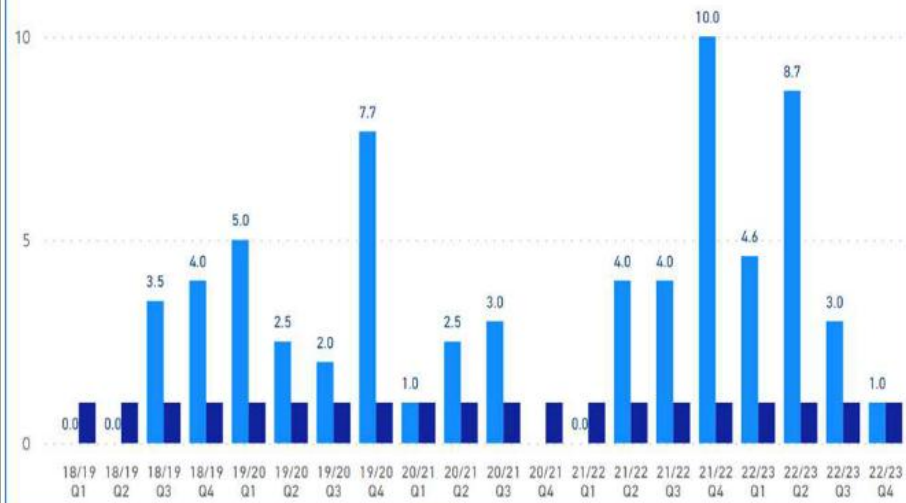


CS. SPS0.01 Number of Complaints Received



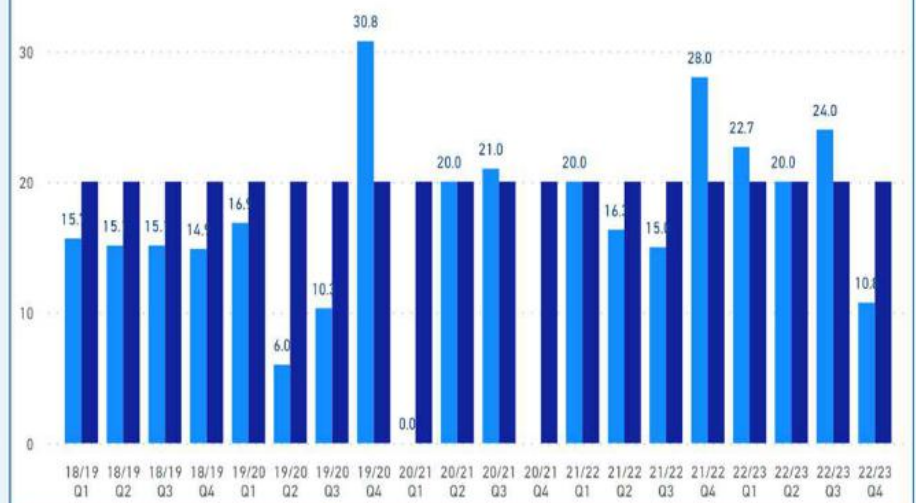
CS. SPS0 4.1 Stage 1 Complaints response times

● Ave. working days response ● Target



CS. SPS0 4.2 Stage 2 Complaints response times

● Ave. working days response ● Target



## 01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

### GIRFEC Service Priority: More children and young people are safe, healthy and resilient

#### Priority Action 1: Develop a Midlothian Whole Family Support Service

##### Progress and Achievement in Q4

- The team are in place however still a significant amount of development work to be undertaken to ensure we are utilising the service towards holistic family support at the earliest point of contact.

##### Plans for improvement next year ahead

- Undertake a full review of 3<sup>rd</sup> sector support which will be available to enhance this service so that we have a menu of options of support for families
- Ensure that we have a self evaluation plan in place that will evidence the impact of supporting families at the earliest point of access
- Develop a single point of access

Performance Indicator	Due Date	Target	Baseline (previous data)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Funding and resources are in place for 23/24	31/03/23	New Measure	0		12 staff recruited	All staff in place	All staff in place

#### Priority Action 2: Increase the number of families who benefit from Family Systemic work

##### Progress and Achievement in Q4

- Achievements being that workers are now trained in NVR (non-violent resistance) and beginning to support parents using coaching methods in NVR.
- Continue to manage the waiting list to keep it to a minimum
- Support to help families to improve relationships and communication. Feedback from family- 'it was better than I expected as I want sure what to expect... it was bringing the family together, identifying ideas for helping, feeling heard.'

##### Plans for improvement next year ahead

- Currently writing an update on the benefits of having a second worker in systemic work. However uncertainty exists about whether this post will retained or the person will return to their substantive post.
- Another member of the EIP team is due to start their systemic family training at foundational level in September 23

Performance Indicator	Due Date	Target	Baseline (previous data)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
17 new families	31/03/23	17	12	4	5	29	17

#### Priority Action 3: Promote the use of Self-Directed Support (SDS) amongst families using services

##### Progress and Achievement in Q4

- We continue to make significant progress in this area of work with families having the option of us supporting the or making their own decisions about what support looks like.

##### Plans for improvement next year ahead

- Consolidate our learning over the past year and develop a team that is skilled and competent in what is a growing area of need
- Develop a menu of options that offer support to children and their families who have additional support needs

Performance Indicator	Due Date	Target	Baseline (previous data)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Increase by 10% the number of families who organise their own support	31/03/23	75	68		46	67	87

**Priority Action 4: Further develop the supports offered to Family Group Decision Making and Kinship supports**

*Progress and Achievement in Q4*

- The pace of growth in this area of work is a good example of us intervening earlier with families and more importantly empowering them to find their own solutions. The team has a skilled workforce who are fully committed to offering a service that is respectful and works in partnership with families to manage risk in often very complex situations.

*Plans for improvement next year ahead*

- To secure funding for permanent posts as most of the staff are funded via short term funding applications.
- To develop the service so that FGDM is core to all the work we undertake in children's services.
- To develop the service so that we can further support our kinship carers as and when they require this.

Performance Indicator	Due Date	Target	Baseline (previous data)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of families who are referred to Family Group Decision Making	31/03/23	increase 21/22 figs by 15%	79		32	59	82
Number of families who participate in Family Group Decision Making	31/03/23	Increase 21/22 figs by 10%	32		16	24	42
The number of assessments by kinship worker	31/03/23	increase 21/22 fig by 15%	14		4	6	6
Percentage of kinship carers who attend engagement sessions	31/03/23	80% of Kinship carers one event	New Measure		0	0	N/A
Reduce the number of CEYP who enter homeless accommodation vs other suitable accommodation	31/03/23	2			N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of CEYP living with Foster Carers on After Care arrangement post 21 years	31/03/23	3	New Measure		N/A	N/A	1
Increase number of young people in the National Housing Project	31/03/23	10-12	New Measure		N/A	N/A	27
Average age of young people in Continuing Care	31/03/23	Age 18	New Measure		N/A	N/A	18

**Priority Action 5: Develop a pathway for children and families to navigate mental health services**

*Progress and Achievement in Q4*

- There had been an agreement 22/23 for CAHMS for give the LA £100k to develop a Single Point of Access. Due to staffing issues within our service this didn't progress and CAHMS have now withdrawn the funding for this piece of work.

*Plans for improvement next year ahead*

- Develop a Single Point of Access that will be led by CAMHS rather than the LA
- Continue to improve options for C&YP to access mental health services at the earliest point of need.

Performance Indicator	Due Date	Target	Baseline (previous data)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1 x Single Point of Access in place (SPOA)	31/03/23	New Measure	0		N/A	N/A	N/A

**Priority Action 6: Strengthen mechanisms to support families maximise their income**

*Progress and Achievement in Q4*

- There has been significant work over the year supporting families to access benefits/additional funding which they are entitled to, in order to ease the pressure of the cost of living crisis

*Plans for improvement next year ahead*

- Continue to offer this support in a flexible way that meets the needs of families
- Further work to be undertaken regarding referrals received when families have had 3 offers of support from the Scottish Welfare Fund, we need to develop a pathway that keeps them away from statutory services and identify what other offers of support they can access.

Performance Indicator	Due Date	Target	Baseline (previous data)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of families offered an income assessment	31/03/23	90	60		27	45	68

**Priority Action 7: Children, young people and their families experience high quality services**

*Progress and Achievement in Q4*

- We have had our inspection of our children's residential houses where we received 'Very Good' grades which is a magnificent achievement.

*Plans for improvement next year ahead*

- Ensure we maintain a high standard of care in all our services
- Foster care recruitment will be a focus of work in the coming year, as there is a local and national shortage of foster carers.

Performance Indicator	Due Date	Target	Baseline (previous data)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Local Adoption Service will provide high quality care and support	31/03/23	Care inspection Grading of GOOD	New Measure		N/A	N/A	N/A
Local Fostering Service will provide high quality care and support	31/03/23	Care inspection Grading of GOOD	New Measure		N/A	N/A	N/A
Local Continuing Care/Adult services will provide high quality care and support	31/03/23	Care inspection Grading of GOOD	New Measure		N/A	N/A	N/A
Hawthorn Family Learning Centre will provide high quality care and support	31/03/22	Care inspection Grading of GOOD	New Measure		N/A	N/A	N/A
Young People's Care Homes will provide high quality care and support	31/03/22	Care inspection Grading of GOOD	New Measure		N/A	VERY GOOD	N/A

**Priority Action 8: Children and young people are supported to develop a strong sense of their own identity**

*Progress and Achievement in Q4*

- We gather qualitative and quantitative information regularly which supports our ethos of ensuring C&YP develop a strong sense of their own identity.

*Plans for improvement next year ahead*

- Continue to train staff and carers to better understand life story work and the impact this has on C&YP lives

Performance Indicator	Due Date	Target	Baseline (previous data)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Staff are trained and understand Life Story work	31/03/23	20	16		N/A at this time	12	

**Priority Action 9: Children and young people are supported by staff who understand the importance of trauma informed practice**

*Progress and Achievement in Q4*

- Roll out of trauma informed practice for all staff across the service

*Plans for improvement next year ahead*

- Ensure that trauma informed practice is embedded in all our work and our meetings with families

Performance Indicator	Due Date	Target	Baseline (previous data)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Staff are trained in using a trauma informed approach	31/03/23	20	15		N/A at this time	N/A at this time	N/A at this time

## 02. Challenges and Risks

**Workforce:** The biggest challenge facing children's services in quarter 4 is the workforce. Whilst there is a national workforce issue within social work and social care, we are experiencing higher levels of staff absence, maternity leave and the inability to recruit external candidates. The pool of agency staff is poor as all local authorities are facing similar challenges. Due to the size of our local authority being unable to recruit coupled with increased sickness absence results in a significant impact on services. The volume of work and new initiatives coming into children's services is increasing and the challenges of identifying suitably skilled and experienced staff to take forward pieces of important work is a real issue. It is becoming increasingly difficult to drive forward change or to allow time for evaluation around how we are doing business.

Whilst not the only factor, the issue is exacerbated by our salaries not being as competitive as neighbouring local authorities. Within the last 6 years we have only been able to recruit one team leader from an external source all other positions have been promotions within the organisation. Furthermore, there is a view that many workers are leaving the profession due to increasing demands being placed on the social work role. We recognise that this is something that professional bodies are tackling nationally.

Currently and unusually we have vacancies for social workers (4), team leader (2) and a service manager backfill. The risk this brings to the service is that we are only able to deliver on operational matters with little or no capacity for managers to do any strategic work. Our numbers of looked after and children on the child protection register remain low which means we are getting this right, and have done for quite some time, but the concern is the volume of referrals coming into the service means we could be at risk of missing something that is low level escalating. Given the many competing demands upon service managers in particular we have no capacity to undertake additional work at this stage to improve or better understand this situation. In August several managers return from maternity leave thus allowing some capacity within the service to take forward areas of improvement.

**Children's Services Referrals:** Referrals into the duty team are at an all-time high. There has been a 49% increase in the number of referrals since 2020 when the pandemic began, and a 13.39% increase from last year to this year. Having undertaken some further exploration a large percentage of referrals are repeat referrals which evidences that we are not getting things right at the first point of contact, furthermore a significant proportion are around financial requests. The inception of the family wellbeing service will over time support a change in practice and culture where we reduce the number of repeat referrals, many of which are related to financial pressures within families. Unfortunately due to workforce issues around recruitment, sickness and maternity leave we have been unable to progress a deeper dive into this piece of work. We are however working with partners to identify a suitable person to progress this work as an area of priority.

**National Care Service:** The 'Bill' which is currently in Stage 1 of the process remains at the developmental phase. The Minister for social care has requested an extension to after the summer recess before publishing another version of what an NCS could look like. A response is still to be received as to whether Parliament agrees to this or not. Given the changes in structure/positions it is likely this will be granted. A significant amount of work is happening behind the scenes around how an NCS could improve outcomes for service users. Over the summer there hopes to be extensive consultation with officers in children's services around the impact of being included or not within the NCS. This level of uncertainty is challenging for the workforce and comes at a time when there is a national workforce crisis across both social work and social care. Work is however being progressed regardless of the NCS status around a National Social Work agency (NSWA) This work is just commencing but there appears to be a real appetite to progress to a national approach to pay and conditions across the land.

**The Promise:** The Promise lead has now commenced in post and will progress Midlothian's Promise Strategy and plan. A challenge in progressing this work will be to engage with all partner agencies to ensure shared responsibilities as corporate parents. A series of Promise engagement/awareness raising will be rolled out across the Council and Partnership and will include Elected members.



**Poverty:** As families continue to be impacted by the cost of living crisis this is expected to lead to an increase in the number of families experiencing poverty. This also applies to workers on low incomes. Financial requests into the children's services remains high however we have recently recruited a worker to look at all financial request to ensure families are accessing the right supports and benefits.

**Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children:** The arrival of Ukrainian families continues in Midlothian with support from the local authority and our 3<sup>rd</sup> sector colleagues too as well as our hosts.

What is more challenging is the arrival of unaccompanied asylum seeking children within Scotland. Last year Scotland received 280 UASC most of which we were mandated to take. The numbers arriving in Kent via the boats are beginning to increase as the weather improves and there is a legitimate concern that we may be mandated as a country to open a hotel to accommodate young people. Within Social Work Scotland and other national groups such as COSLA we are strongly opposing this approach. Having children reside within hotels is not a model of care that anyone in 2023 would support and would result in one local authority having a statutory responsibility for all the looked after young people within this accommodation. Given the current concerns around lack of foster care and residential care accommodation it is very concerning how we shall support ongoing requests to accommodate unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people. To date Midlothian have been able to accept all mandatory requests from the home office however we are now in a position like many other local authorities where we have no foster care placements or beds within our children's house and therefore if a young person under 16 presented tomorrow we would need to consider an external placement.

**Children with and Enduring Complex Needs:** We continue to work with partners to explore how best to meet the current demands and pressure whilst making sure we future proof our services to deliver sustainable options locally for children and young people with ASN and Complex and Enduring Needs. This includes consideration of residential care home provision.

**Foster Care:** We continue to seek and explore options to expand our foster carer population recognising the need to future proof this area of service. We are looking at new campaigns to promote recruitment of foster carers for both local children and young people but also to consider caring for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people. Once again this is a national issue not unique to Midlothian



**Quarterly Reporting PIs - Off Target**

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
<b>22/23.CSPC.4e</b> Number of CEYP living with Foster Carers on After Care arrangement		1	3	01 Jul 2023	2022/23	
<b>BS.CSPC.LPI.04</b> Child Protection: % of Core Group meetings held within a 8 week p...		99%	100%	01 Jul 2023	Q4 2022/23	
<b>BS.CSPC.LPI.05</b> Child Protection: % of Core Group meetings held within 15 days fo...		89%	100%	01 Jul 2023	Q4 2022/23	
<b>CSPC.MPI.02</b> Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence (cumul...		10.17	9.00	01 Jul 2023	Q4 2022/23	
<b>CS.SPSO.04.1</b> Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1		5.091	5	01 Jul 2023	2022/23	
<b>CS.SPSO.05.1</b> Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days		72.73%	95%	01 Jul 2023	2022/23	
<b>CS.SPSO.05.2</b> Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days		72.73%	95%	01 Jul 2023	2022/23	
<b>CS.SPSO.05.3</b> Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working ...		50%	95%	01 Jul 2023	2022/23	

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