

All children, young people, adults and families in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This is achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity and inclusion.

Community Priorities

The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) draw together public, voluntary and private sector bodies, and local communities to deliver a shared 'plan' to improve the lives of local people based on evidence. In Midlothian, the plan is called the Single Midlothian Plan (SMP). This is a shared partnership plan of how we will meet the needs of our local communities and brings together all the priorities for Midlothian into one place. Our outcomes for the next five years are:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes,
- No child or household need live in poverty,
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

In Midlothian the Getting It Right for Every Child Board (GIRFEC) is one of the sub groups of the SMP, and one of the main drivers for the effective delivery of services to children. The GIRFEC Plan also known as the Integrated Children's Service Plan 2020-2023, is a statutory three year plan devised by the local authority and health. The plan develops key outcomes and priority actions which are designed to improve the lives of children, young people and families. The plan is coming to an end and a new three year plan 2023-2026 is currently being drafted.

The GIRFEC outcomes for the final year of the three year plan for 2022-23 are:

1. More children and young people are safe, healthy and resilient
2. More children and young people receive timely and effective mental health support when they need it
3. Inequalities in learning are reduced

We are fully committed to realising a children's rights approach to all of our work and ensuring that we embed the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) alongside our Promise commitments.

Progress and Achievements

The Promise

The Promise work continues to drive forward our children's service improvements.

Plan 21-24: Priority Areas

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Referrals:

Work is being progressed and is almost complete around gaining a clearer understanding on how all referrals come into the service.

This has been a significant piece of work involving many stakeholders. Within Q3 there is a 29.0% decrease compared to last year at this time and a 39% decrease in referrals from Q1. The impact of this piece of work is already evidencing positive results. This said the complexity of the referrals coming into the service remains high however it is hoped that we shall offer a much improved service

22/23				23/24		
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
2155	2212	2023	2626	2353	2067	1436

All referrals reported by quarter 2022/23-2023/24

Family Wellbeing Service

The service has had a significant amount of training on offer to the new workforce to ensure they have a good understanding of their role going forward. They are already working with 100 families and 177 children and young people. We are awaiting the arrival of a permanent new team leader for the service which shall help consolidate the learning and training staff have undertaken. We continue to work with our 3rd sector colleagues to agree how we can offer funding to them to support this service to have a holistic overview of the work we are doing with families.

Looked After away from home population

The data evidences that our looked after population is fairly static bearing in mind data changes on a daily basis. These stats are testament to the workforce ensuring that they support families to remain together, where safe to do so. The introduction of Family Group decision making, supports families to devise a plan which promotes families staying together with support from extended family. It is too early to advise if this is the reason for the consistent decline in numbers. Child Protection has reduced from last quarter however domestic abuse remains the main reason children's names are on the CP Register.

Self-Directed Support

We continue to work tirelessly to ensure that families had access to funding if assessed as in need . The summer period is often a challenge for families trying to identify sufficient resources for children with additional support needs. Our aim is to start planning for the summer period so that families are aware of what resources are available and have choice where their child(ren) can attend.

Trauma Informed Training

We remain committed to ensure all our staff are trauma informed this includes our foster carers. A rolling programme of training is being rolled out across the directorate and Council.

Challenges and risks

National Care Service:

The 'Bill' which is currently in Stage 1 has been postponed again with an expected outcome on the 1st March 2024. There remains no information around whether or not children's services and Justice will be included within the NCS.

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. We are assessing all claims that come into children and families from the Scottish Welfare Fund for early identification of families who may need additional support.

Workforce:

Midlothian continues to experience the same staffing issues encountered by other Councils. There is a general lack of experienced and skilled staff across the sector, and we are having to increasingly rely on locum workers. As reported in previous quarters, this is a national issue and discussions have started around A National Social Work Agency which would offer the same terms and conditions across Scotland, similar to that of Police Scotland and Education staff. This would benefit Midlothian if this approach were adopted. Workforce is a very live issue and impacting significantly on staff with higher rates of absence due to the stress this issue is causing. We are looking at a recruitment campaign over 3 days around June 2024 to try and attract social workers for children and adult services, social care staff, CLLE staff, teachers and learning assistants to try and bring new workers into Midlothian.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

We continue to work with our Home Office colleagues to try to find a fairer way to share the distribution of UASC who arrive mainly in Kent on small boats. Most local authorities in Scotland are at capacity with regard to having no more foster or residential capacity to accommodate these young people. We therefore have to think differently around how we are all going to manage this ever-increasing demand.

Increased numbers of children impacted by the delay in neurodevelopmental waiting times:

There is a significant delay in families waiting for an appointment with CAMHS regarding neurodevelopment concerns. Not all cases will require clinical input from CAMHS however we are looking at how we can work together to consider how we best support families whilst on the waiting list. 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. A neurodevelopmental pathway is in the early stages of development.

Foster Care

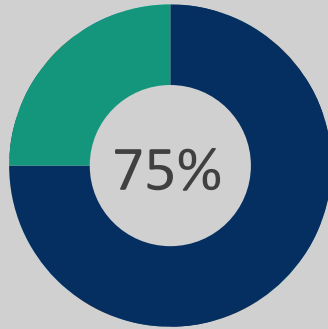
Given the local and national foster care crisis we are planning a major advertising campaign in March 2024 to hopefully generate prospective carers for teenagers and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people.

Financial Pressures

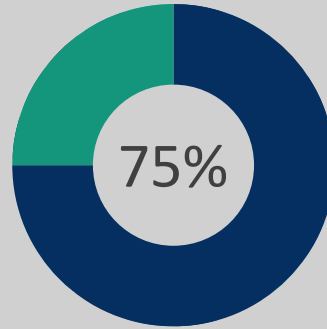
Finance is an ongoing challenge although at Q3 we continue to have a small underspend across the whole of the service.

Service Priority 1 - Ensure the Midlothian Wellbeing Service is aligned with other family supports across Midlothian

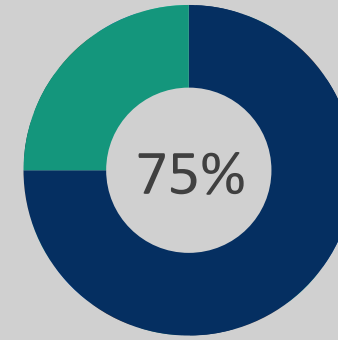
Progress of actions to achieve priority



Ensure funding and resources are in place for 23/24



Implement a formal launch of service across Directorate



Develop process to understand family supports commissioned across Midlothian

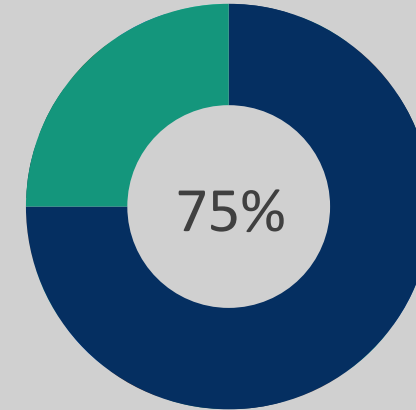
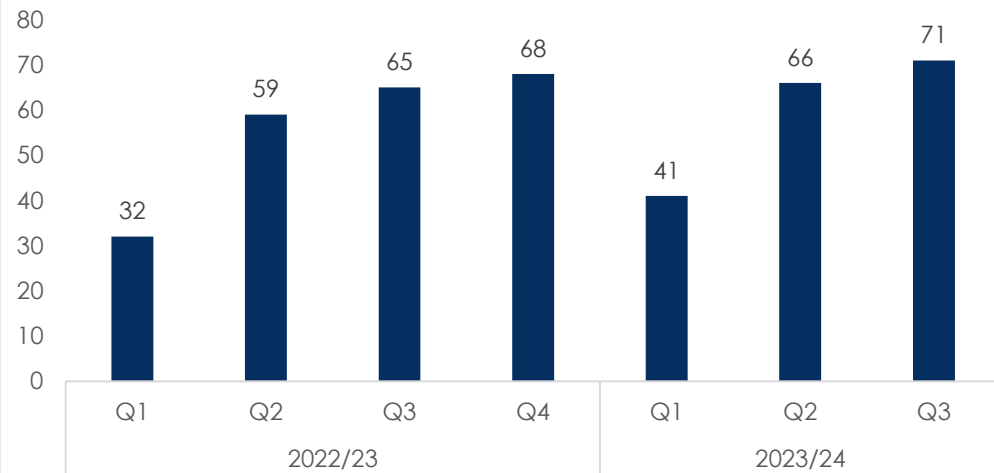
Key achievements this quarter:

- Work is well under way, the funding is in place and there has been a soft launch of the service with our partners. We continue to drive forward the work around the commissioning of 3rd sector services.

Service Priority 2 - Promote the use of Self-Directed Support amongst families to empower them to have choice and flexibility

Progress of actions to achieve priority

Number of families who take option 1 to organise their own support



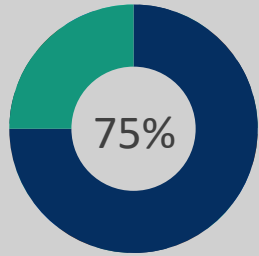
Increase by 10% the number of families who take Option 1 to organise their own support

Key achievements this quarter:

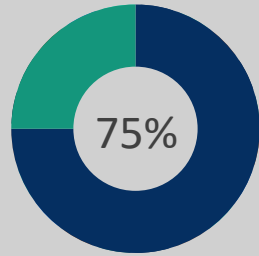
- In total there has been an increase of 30 families using SDS since Q1, which is a 73.2% increase and is the highest number now than at any point last year. There has also been a 7.6% increase in families from Q2, which was slightly lower compared to the same period last year (10.2%).
- This is a great achievement over the quarter and year with numbers continuing to increase. The issue we are facing is the lack of resources within the community to support families who want to access respite or clubs for their children who have additional support needs. Many organisations do not offer a service to children with additional support needs due to the increase costs in staffing but also finding suitably skilled staff is an ongoing issue.

Service Priority 3 - Strengthen supports offered to Family Group Decision Making and Kinship supports to maintain children with birth/kin families

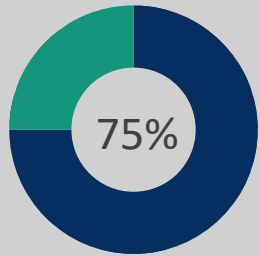
Progress of actions to achieve priority



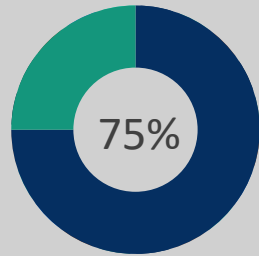
Increase the number of families who participate in Family Group Decision Making



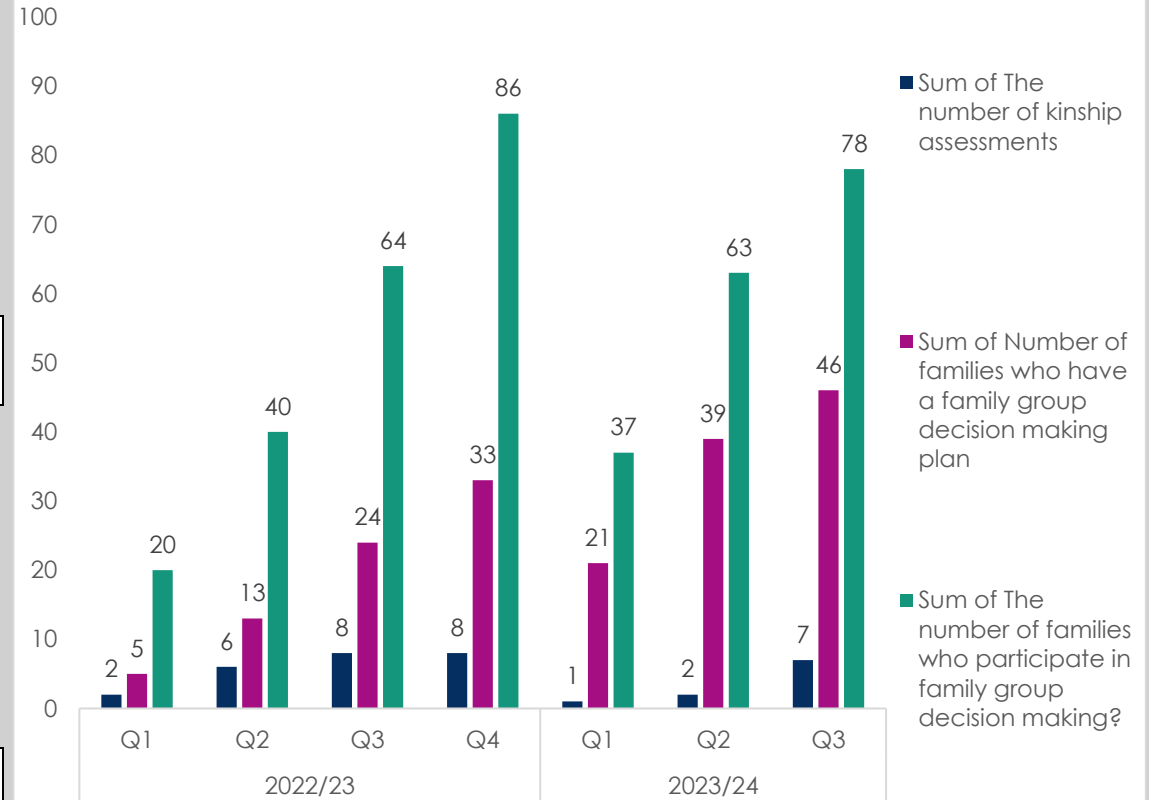
Increase the number of families who have a Family Group Decision Making plan



Increase the number of Kinship assessment undertaken



Develop permanence process to formally secure children in kinship

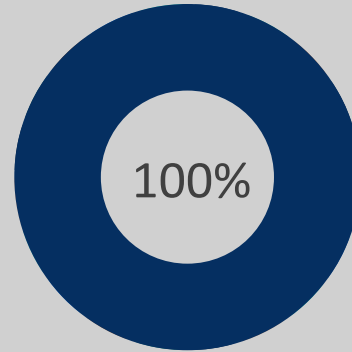


Key achievements this quarter:

- The number of families participating in family group decision making is now higher than it was at this point last year (78), and the number with a family decision making plan is higher, by almost double than compared to this period last year.

Service Priority 4 – Implement the National Child Protection Guidance locally

Progress of actions to achieve priority



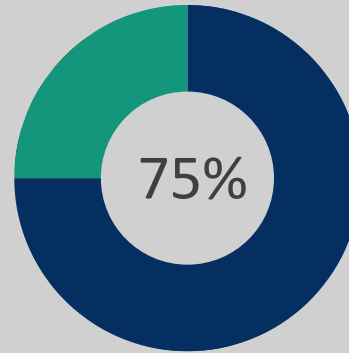
Contribute towards the development of Lothian wide Child Protection Procedures

Key achievements this quarter:

- We have launched the new Child Protection Procedures across Edinburgh, Midlothian, West Lothian and East Lothian with on going training in place for all staff.

Service Priority 5 - Develop a pathway for children and families to navigate mental health services in a timely manner

Progress of actions to achieve priority

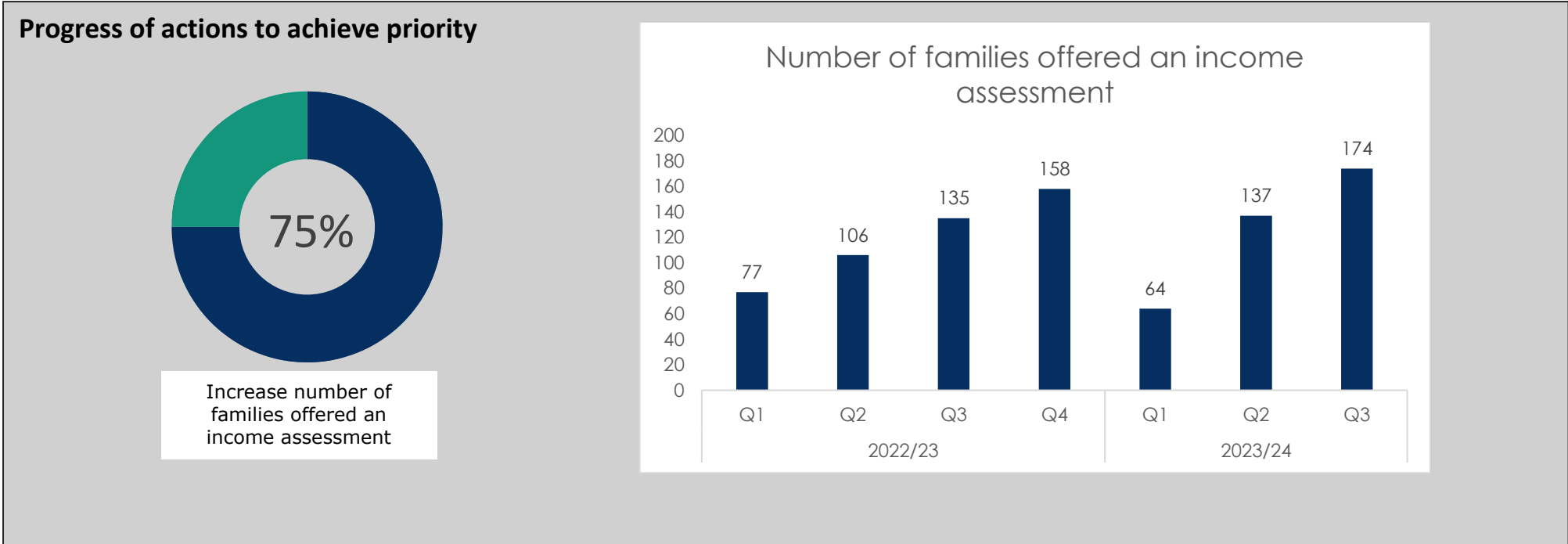


Develop a Single Point of Access across the directorate

Key achievements this quarter:

- Work is progressing on this matter. Funding has been agreed with CAMHS to fund a part time worker to take this work forward. This is being progressed via the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Sub Group.

Service Priority 6 - Strengthen mechanisms to support families maximise their income

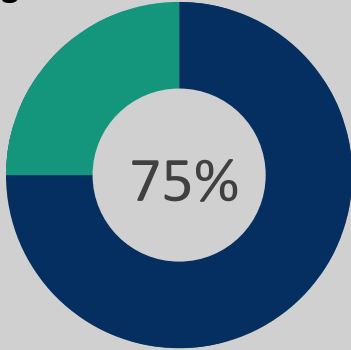


Key achievements this quarter:

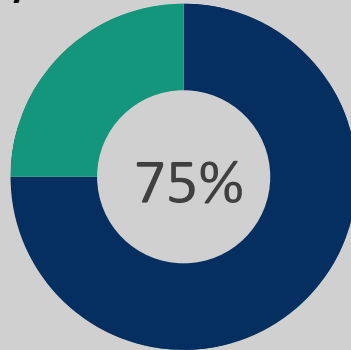
- The number of families offered an income assessment is higher for Q3 (174), than at any point last year. There was also a 27.0% increase in families from Q2.

Service Priority 7 - Children, young people and their families experience high quality services

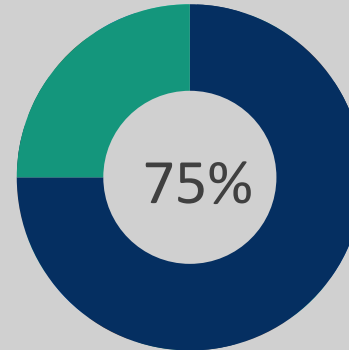
Progress of actions to achieve priority



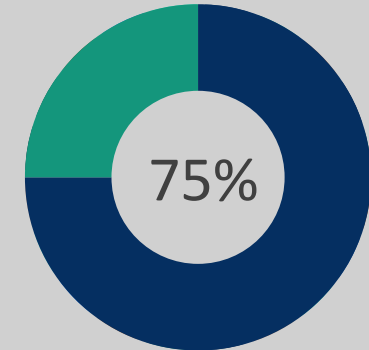
Ensure local Adoption Service will provide high quality care and support



Ensure local Continuing Care/Adult services will provide high quality care



Ensure Hawthorn Family Learning Centre will provide high quality care and support



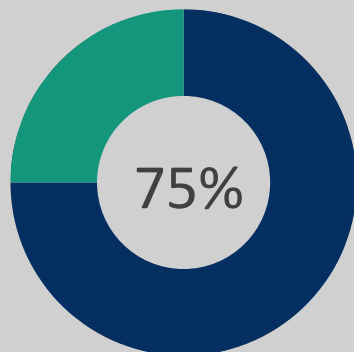
Ensure 2 x Young People's Care Homes will provide high quality care

Key achievements this quarter:

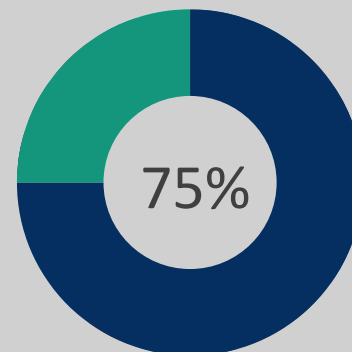
- An inspection took place in September 2023 for Fostering/ Adoption and Continuing Care – an improvement plan has been developed on the back of this and is closely scrutinized and monitored by Social Work Assurance Group (SWAG) to ensure the recommendations are being actioned and improvements being made.

Service Priority 8 – Strengthen the number of staff who understand the importance of trauma informed practice

Progress of actions to achieve priority



Develop a timetable of events that offer training opportunities and development for all CS staff



Increase the number of staff trained in using a trauma informed approach

Key achievements this quarter:

- Work is continuing in this area with a continued programme of rolling training events for all staff that undertake the trauma informed practice training.

Pentana Performance Dashboard

A full review of quarterly performance data is available via Pentana (Browser login link - <https://midlothian.pentanarpm.uk/login>)

Quarter 3 - Children's Services Partnership and Communities-



Quarterly Reporting PIs - Off Target

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
BS.CSPC.LPI.05 Child Protection: % of Core Group meetings held within 15 days fo...		83%	100%	01 Apr 2024	Q3 2023/24	
CS.SPSO.04.1 Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1		5.5	5	01 Apr 2024	Q3 2023/24	
CS.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days		50%	95%	01 Apr 2024	Q3 2023/24	

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