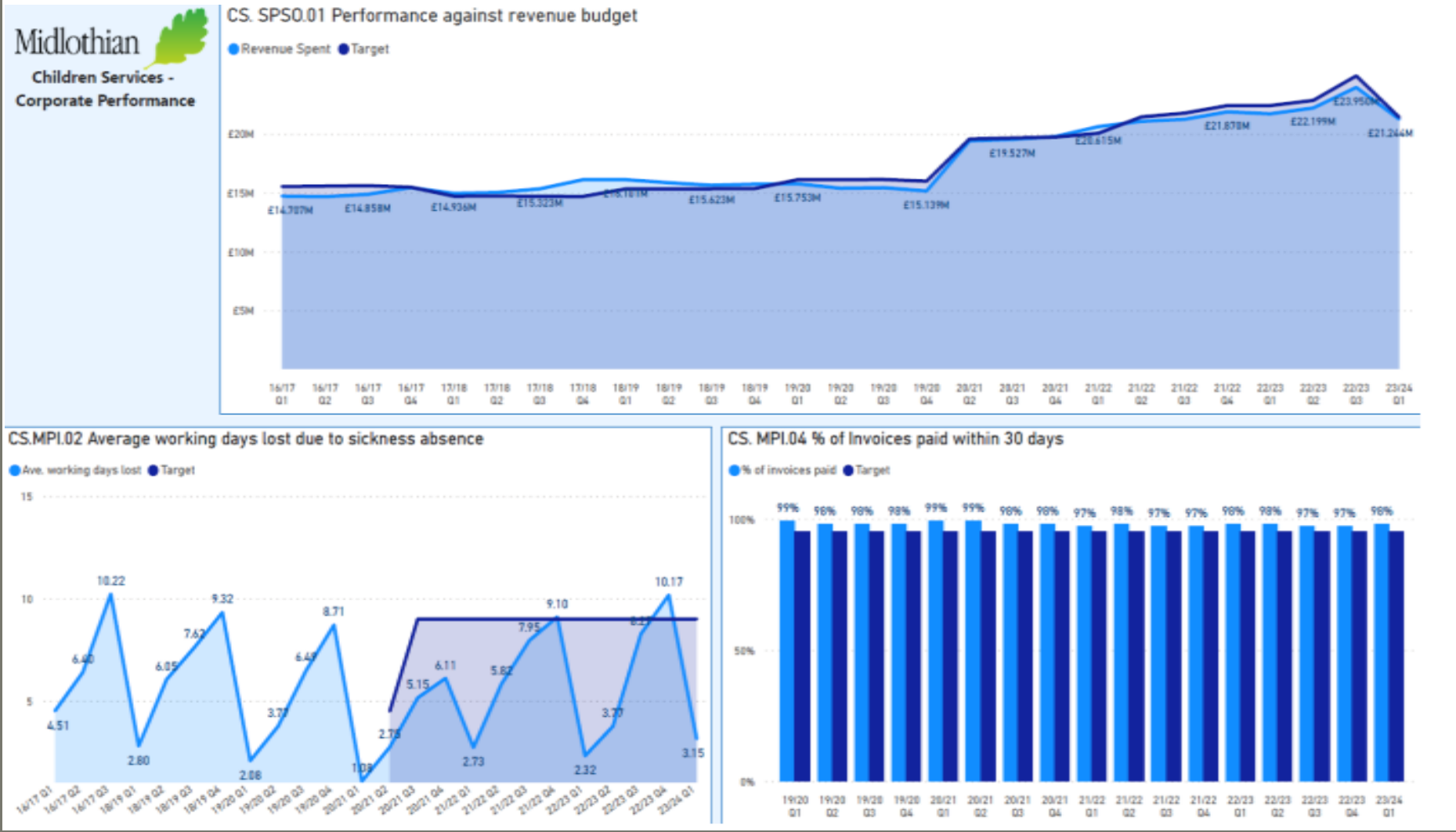


Children's Services, Partnership and Communities Performance Report 2023/24

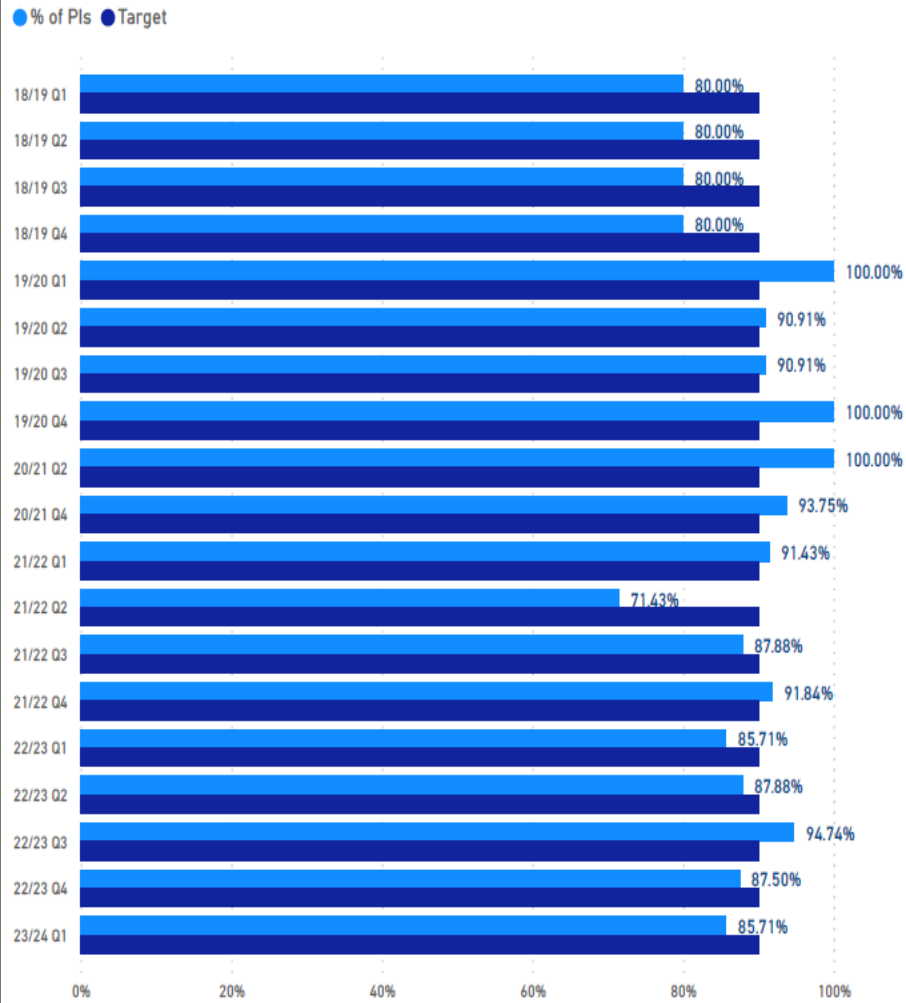


- Quarter 1

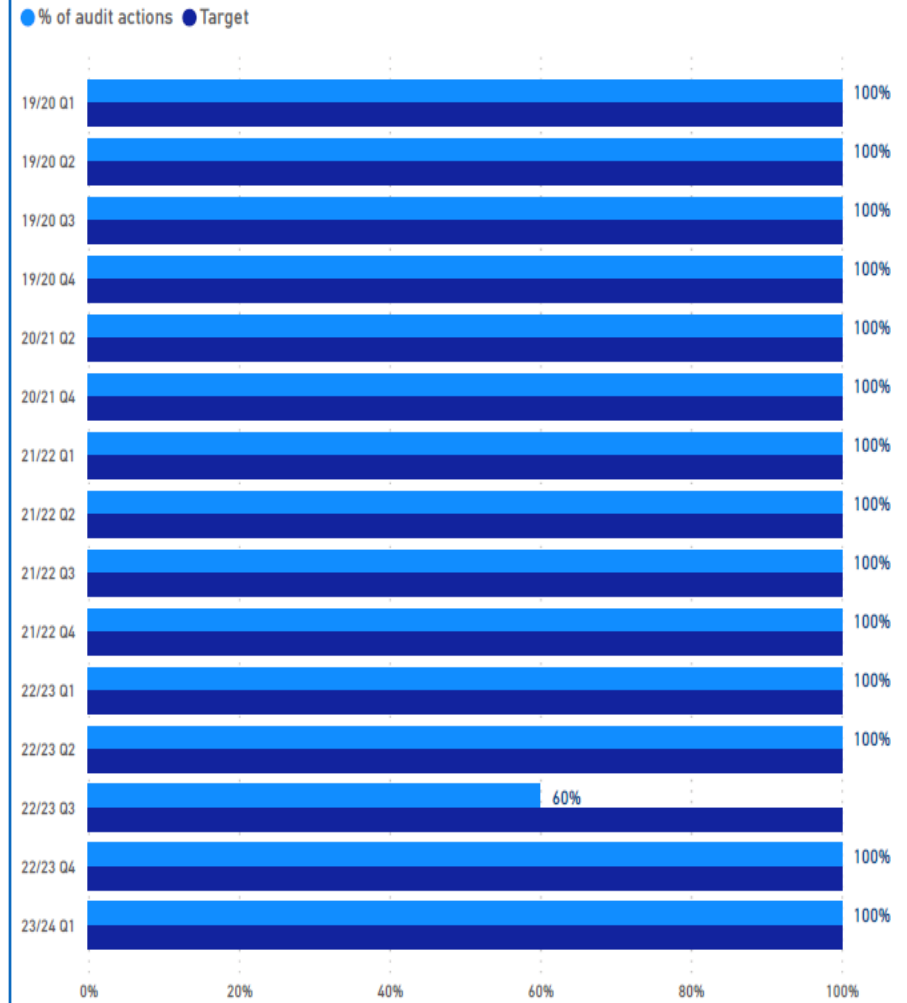
01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes



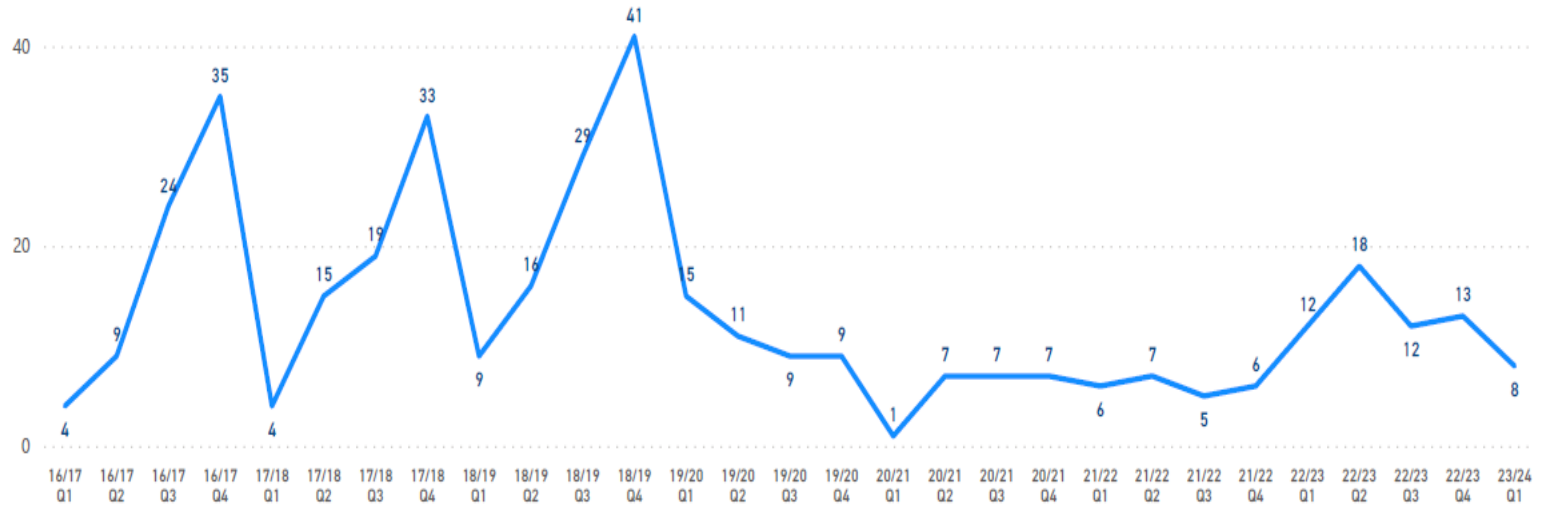
CS. MPI.05 % of PIs on target



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

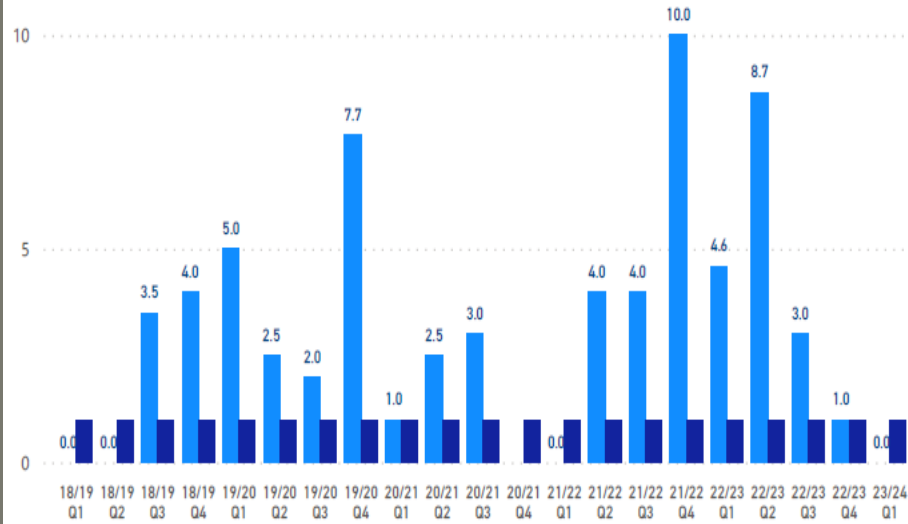


CS. SPS0.01 Number of Complaints Received



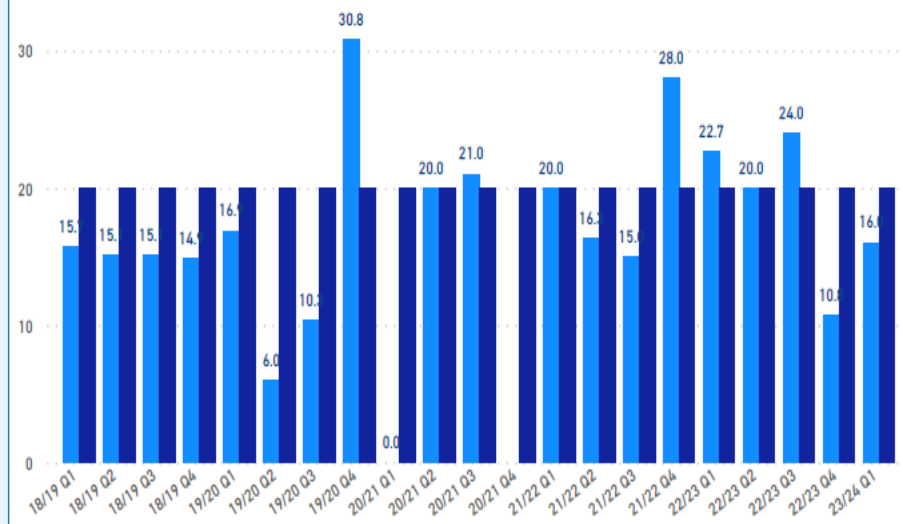
CS. SPS0 4.1 Stage 1 Complaints response times

● 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

The Promise

The Promise lead has now commenced in post and will progress Midlothian's Promise Strategy and plan. They will work to engage 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.

Youth Justice

In preparation for the summer holidays a multi agency team of staff met to plan interventions over the summer period. There have been and continue to be concerns around groupings of young people meeting at Hardengreen where we have McDonald's who offer free internet, this coupled with free travel has led to incidents at Tesco's. Police, LRT, and staff from education, children's services and CLLE including our voluntary sector colleagues as well as staff from the shops involved are working together to reduce the risk to the public and also looking at initiatives with Saltire Soccer and others which divert youths to alternative activities. This is very much a multi-agency approach. Work has also been undertaken with over 1000 children in S1 & S2 on No Knives, better life's.

Summer Funding Programme

At the end of June we received funding from Scottish Government which was to be utilised to support families to access activities over the summer which would also include getting access to food. Very swiftly we were able to meet with our 3rd sector colleagues and agree who would be in a position to offer support. There were many vouchers and passes on offer to local amenities and also for activities further afield such as Edinburgh Zoo. During Q2 reporting we shall update on the impact this funding had and how many families benefited from this.

Equally Safe:

Scotland's Strategy for Prevention and Eradicating Violence against women and girls, sets out the Scottish Government and COSLA's joint vision to create a strong and flourishing Scotland where all individual are equally safe and respected. In support of this vision, Midlothian has committed to developing an ambitious strategy to help ensure all women, children and young people living in Midlothian are equally safe. The development of this strategy offers an opportunity to bring together and building on a range of strategic activities that have been progressed across Midlothian in recent years that aim to tack gender inequality. The Improvement Service are supporting us to develop a strategy. To date there have been several meetings with the leadership across the Council chaired by Chief Officer of Children's Services to take this work forward.

Referrals:

Work is being progressed around gaining a clearer understanding on how all referrals come into the service. This is a large piece of work involving many stakeholders. The outcome of which shall offer an overview on how many referrals come into children's services and how many 'referrals' are actually just about information sharing. We shall also be able to gain a better understanding as to how many referrals will be directed to the Family Wellbeing Service. Within Q1 although there is a 9% increase in referrals from Q1 in 2022, within the last three months from Q4 2022, to Q1 23, there has been a 12% decrease in referrals which is positive and may be as a result of the work we have started.

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 over 100 children and young people. We have an independent person undertaking a review of what voluntary support we can buy-in to support this service. It is hoped this shall be concluded by the end of October.

Arrival of Ukrainian Families and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

We continue to welcome Ukrainian families into Midlothian adopting a holistic approach to the support on offer. We are confident that our steady and thorough approach to this work has ensured that we are robust in the work we are undertaking. Through a mandated rota we are committed to taking UASC as and when required. To date we have been able to identify suitable accommodate for them.

Looked After away from home population

The data evidences that our looked after population is continuing to decrease which is 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 reason for this consistent decline in numbers. Conversely child protection registrations are rising, a high percentage of registrations are as a result of domestic abuse. We shall monitor this position going forward.

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 next year so that families are aware of what is 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.

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

- Please note that this is a new plan for 23/24 and therefore the progress at this stage is limited

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

Priority actions for 2023/24

- Ensure funding and resources are in place for 23/24
- Implement a formal launch of service across the Directorate
- Develop process to understand family supports commissioned across Midlothian

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

Priority actions for 2023/24

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

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

Priority actions for 2023/24

- 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

Service Priority Action 4: Implement the National Child Protection Guidance locally

Priority actions for 2023/24

- Contribute towards the development of Lothian wide Child Protection Procedures

Service Priority Action 5: Develop a pathway for children and families to navigate services in a timely manner

Priority actions for 2023/24

- Develop a Single Point of Access across the directorate

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

Priority actions for 2023/24

- Increase the number of families offered an income assessment

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

Priority actions for 2023/24

- Ensure local Adoption Service will provide high quality care and support
- Ensure local Continuing Care/Adult services will provide high quality care and support
- 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 and support

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

Priority actions for 2023/24

- Increase the number of staff trained in using a trauma informed approach
- Develop a timetable of events that offer training opportunities and development for all CS staff

02. Challenges and Risks

Q1 23/24:

National Care Service: The 'Bill' which is currently in Stage 1 of the process is delayed and being considered with an expectation that the lead committee will provide a report at the start of 2024. CELCIS have been commissioned to undertake research around the inclusion of children's services within the NCS. This work should be concluded by the end of the summer 2023.

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. Anecdotally we are hearing from our partners that families living in large private housing estates are also struggling with increased mortgage rates coupled with high energy costs and food bills. The impact is additional stress within family homes.

Workforce:

Midlothian continues to experience the same staffing issues encountered by other Councils. Despite the staffing issues we have continued to offer high quality services that ensure the safety and wellbeing of our children and young people within Midlothian. There continues to be a lack of experienced and skilled staff across the sector, and we are having to increasingly rely on locum workers. As reported in other 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.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

We continue to ensure that we meet our mandated quota of unaccompanied children seeking asylum in Midlothian. The pressure upon us however to ensure that all these young people are looked after within Midlothian is significant. We, like many other local authorities shall need to begin to consider external and much more expensive placements out with Midlothian in the near future. As everyone will be aware the number of children and young people arriving in Britain, mainly Kent, is increasing week on week as the good weather encourages people to travel. Currently we have 8 young people aged 18-23 living in Midlothian who are classed as Unaccompanied asylum seeking young people and living in supported or independent flats but who still require support and 4 young people aged 14-17 who are with carers or in our residential houses.

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.

Sum of Count	Column Labels				
Team	<18 weeks	19-35 weeks	36-52 weeks	>52 weeks	Total
Neurodevelopmental Midlothian	106	130	96	290	622

We have commenced discussions with our health colleagues around this data to consider how we can collectively support families sitting on this waiting list. The current demands and pressure are rising in all areas of work with children therefore we need to ensure we future proof our services to deliver sustainable options locally for children and young people with ASN and Complex and Enduring Needs.

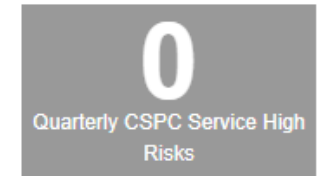
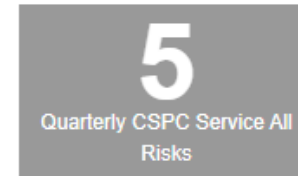
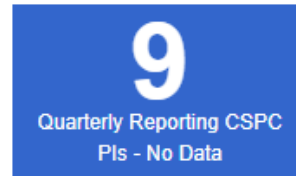
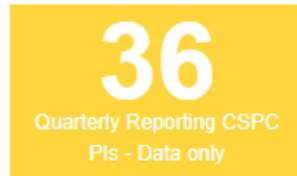
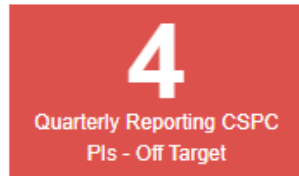
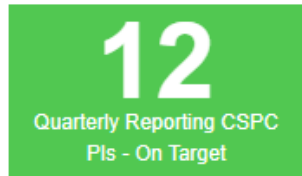
Foster Care

Given the local and national foster care crisis we are about to commence a new advertising campaign to hopefully generate interest from prospective carers who may wish to consider caring for teenagers and unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people.

Financial Pressures

Finance is an ongoing challenge and whilst Q1 reporting looks positive, the request for one placement within secure care or an additional external placement could potentially change our financial position going forward.

Quarter 1 - Children's Services Partnership and Communities-



Quarterly Reporting PIs - Off Target							
...	Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
	22/23.CSPC.4e Number of CEYP living with Foster Carers on After Care arrangement		1	3	01 Jul 2023	2022/23	
	BS.CSPC.LPI.04 Child Protection: % of Core Group meetings held within a 8 week p...		99%	100%	01 Jul 2023	Q4 2022/23	
	BS.CSPC.LPI.05 Child Protection: % of Core Group meetings held within 15 days fo...		89%	100%	01 Jul 2023	Q4 2022/23	
	CS.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working ...		66.67%	95%	01 Oct 2023	Q1 2023/24	

← 1 of 1 →