

## 2023/24 QUARTER 4

# PERFORMANCE REPORT - CHILDREN & FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK & JUSTICE SERVICE.

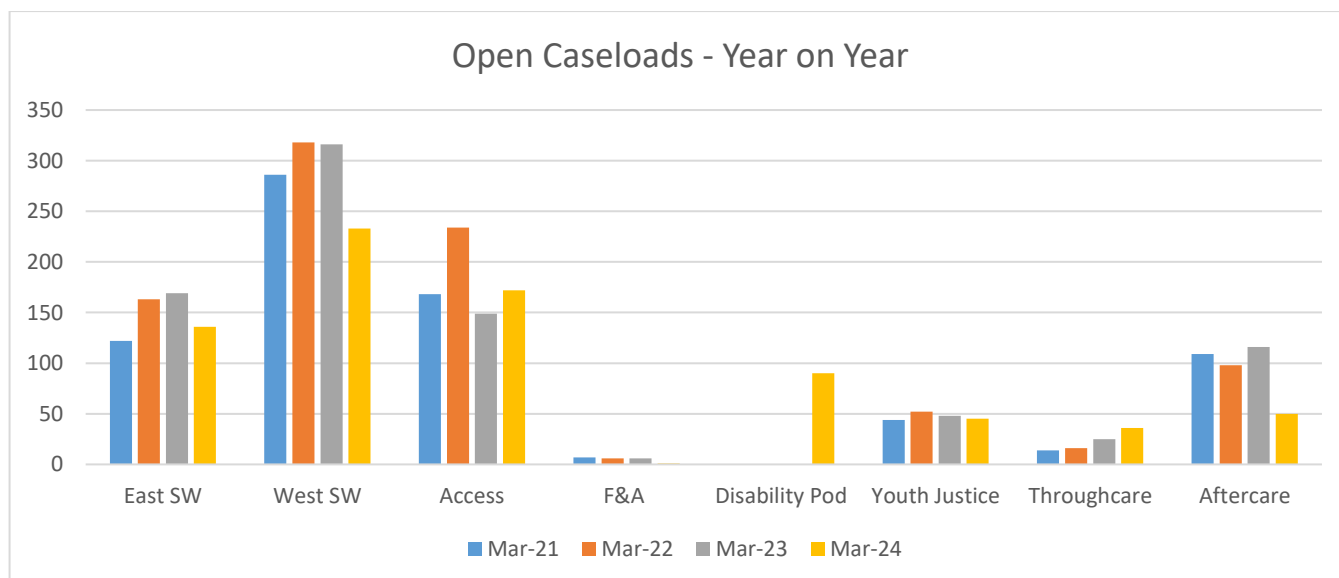
*Narrative included is by exception, links to backing tables for all Children & Families Social Work & Justice Service.*

This report is based upon indicators previously recorded against Strategic and Service Level Service Plan Actions and Operational Indicators in 2022/23. Thus, forming the development of a performance dashboard to report to the IJB .

**\*\*Please note that no comment has been made with regards to Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicators, as the 2022/23 update of these indicators will not be available until May 2024.\*\***

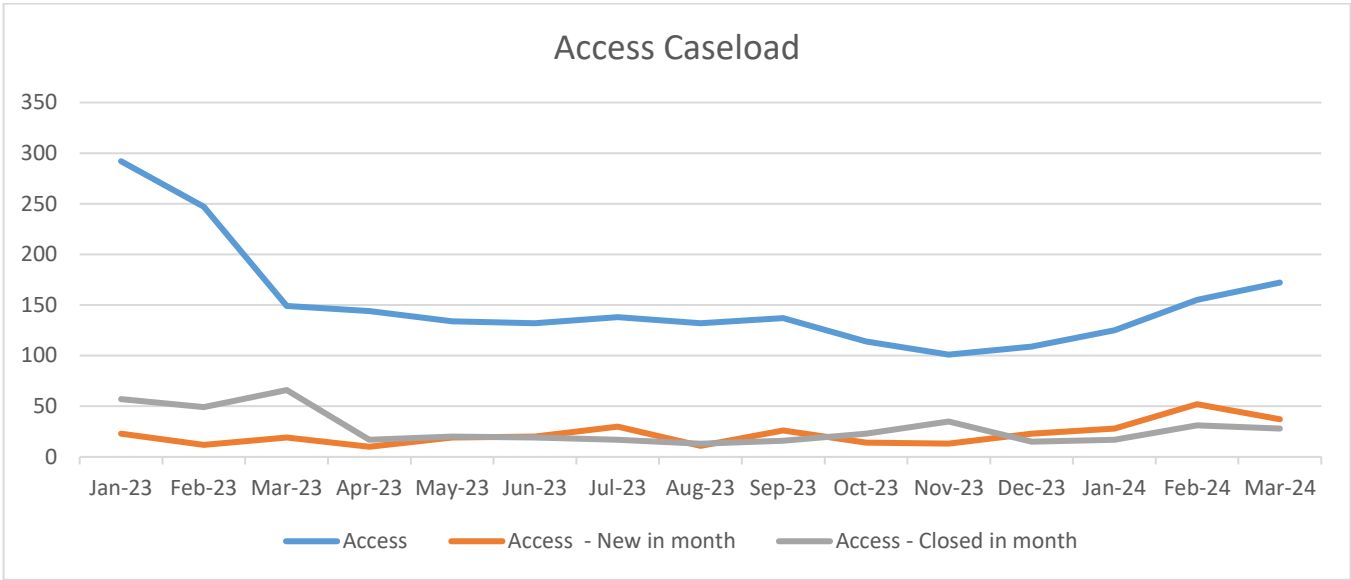
### Social Work Team Caseloads

The table below reflects the number of cases being referred and subsequently opened to children and families Social Work. The teams have worked hard to re-establish thresholds for Social Work intervention following COVID.



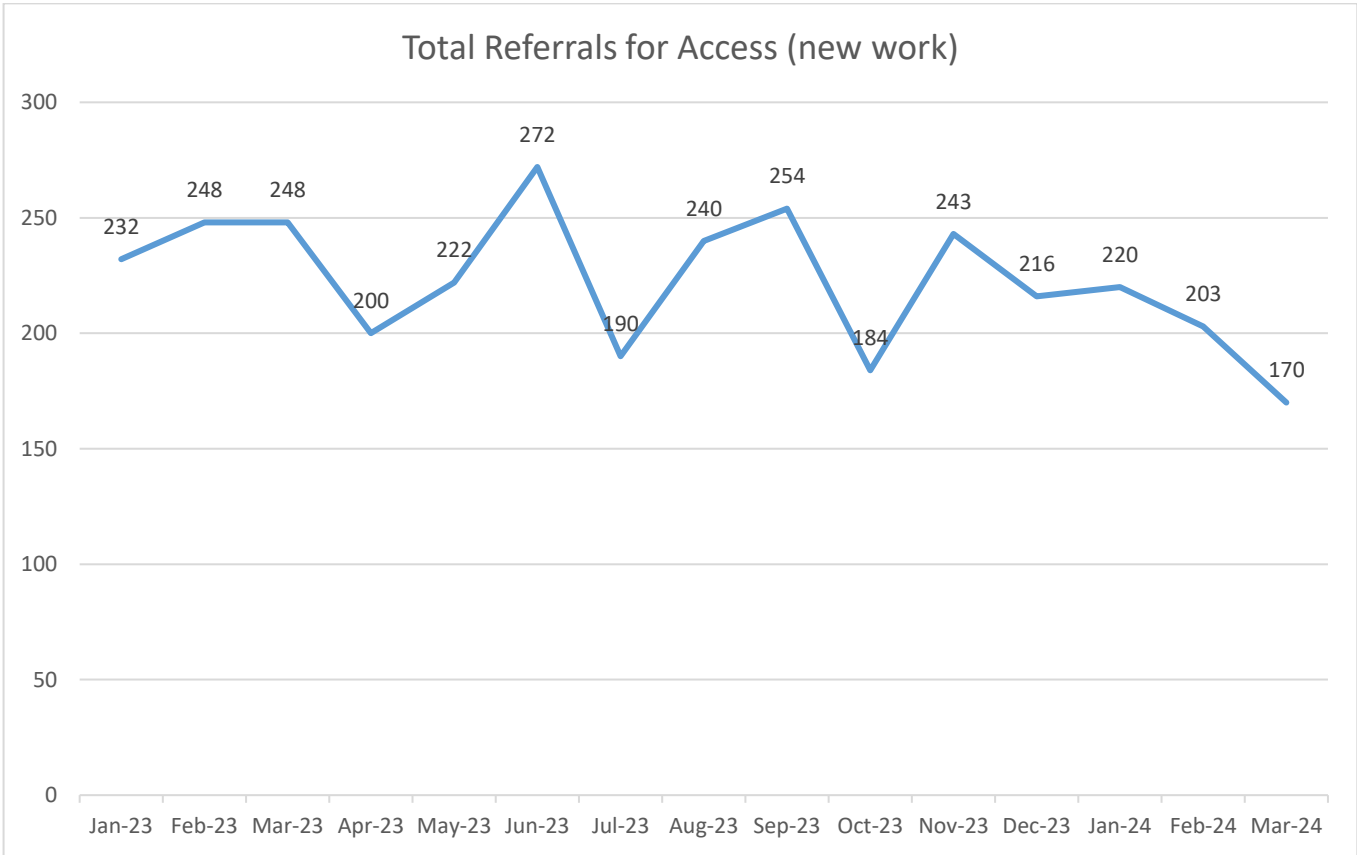
### Access

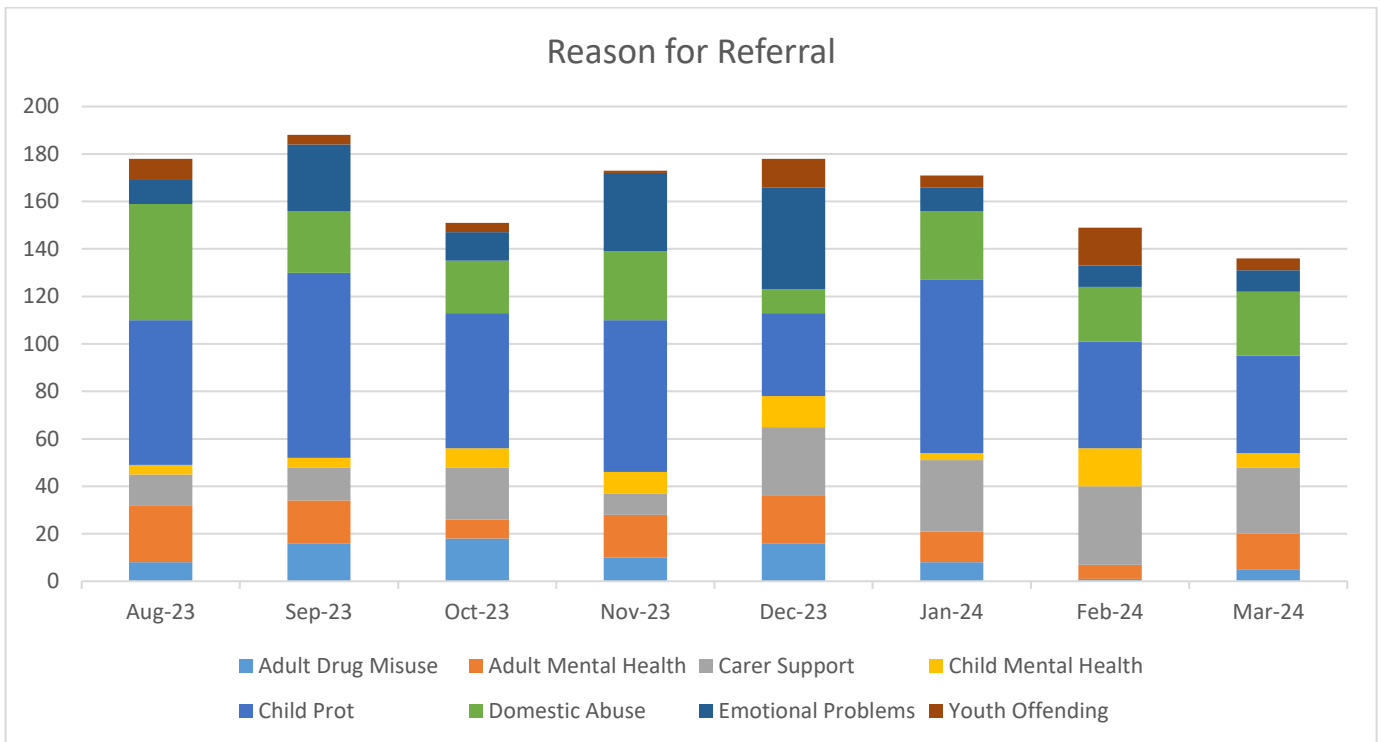
Our Access team is the first point of contact for both professionals and members of the public to raise concerns/request advice and support.



The graph above compares the Access Team’s open cases with the new cases and closed cases each month throughout from Jan 23 to Mar 24.

The number of new referrals fluctuates throughout the year as indicated above.

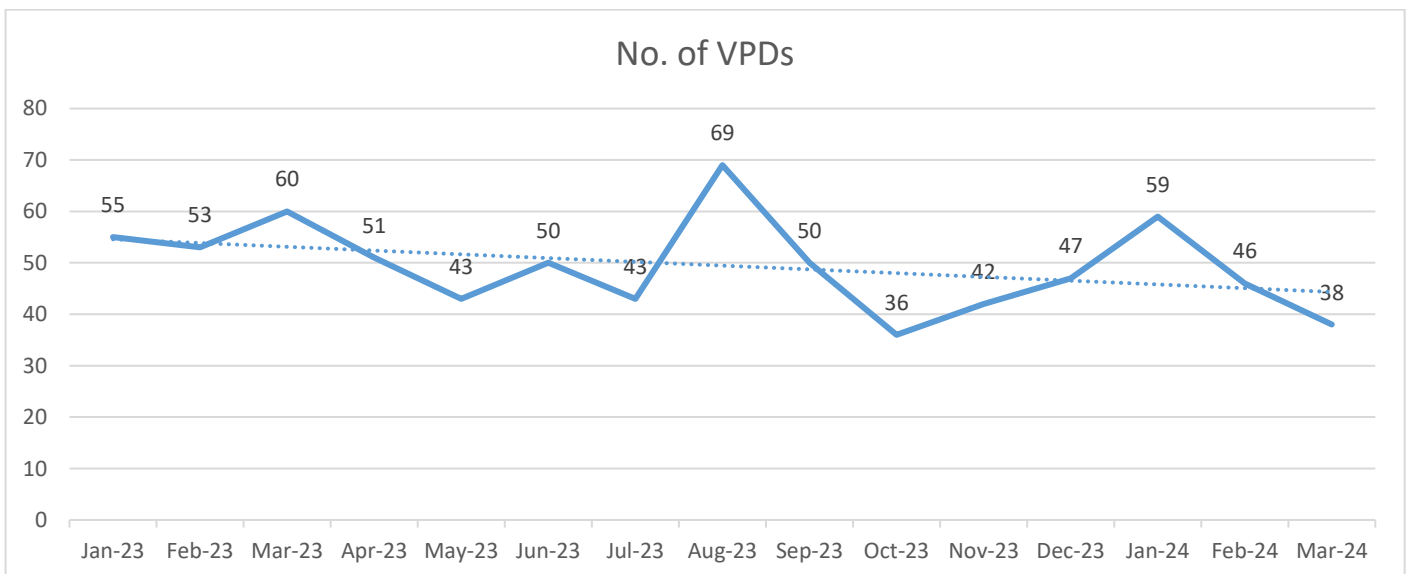




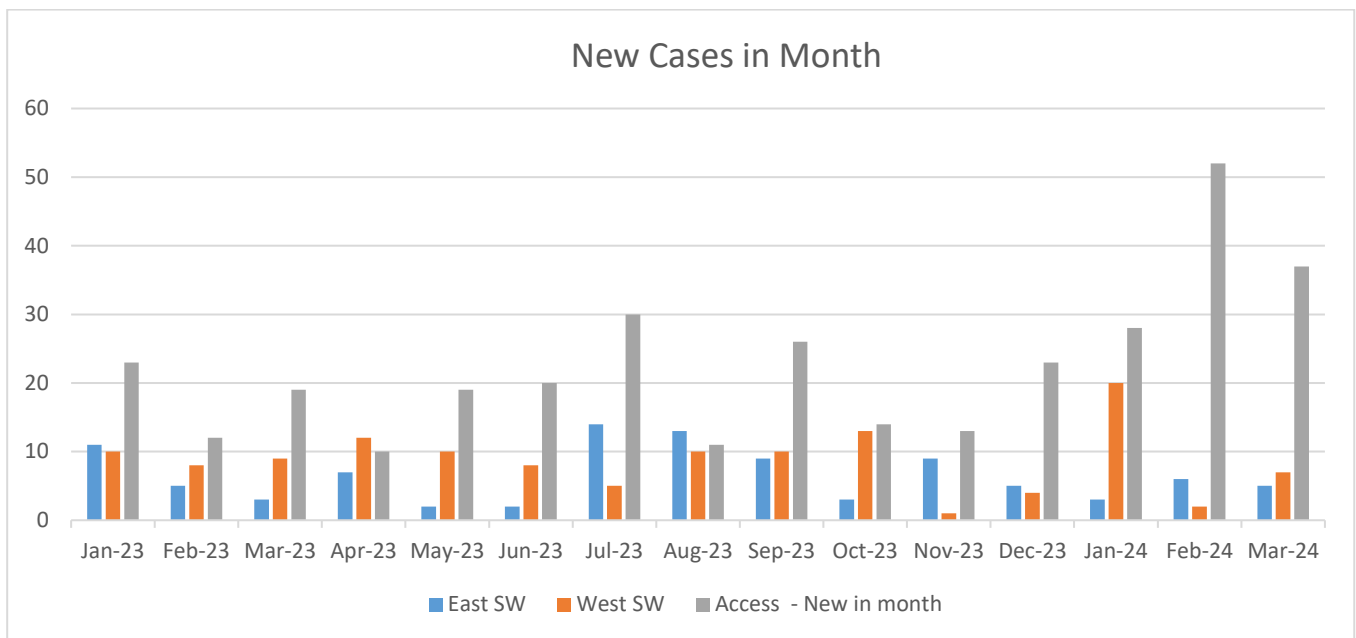
The chart below shows some referral reasons from Aug 23 to Mar 24.

## Police Concern Referrals

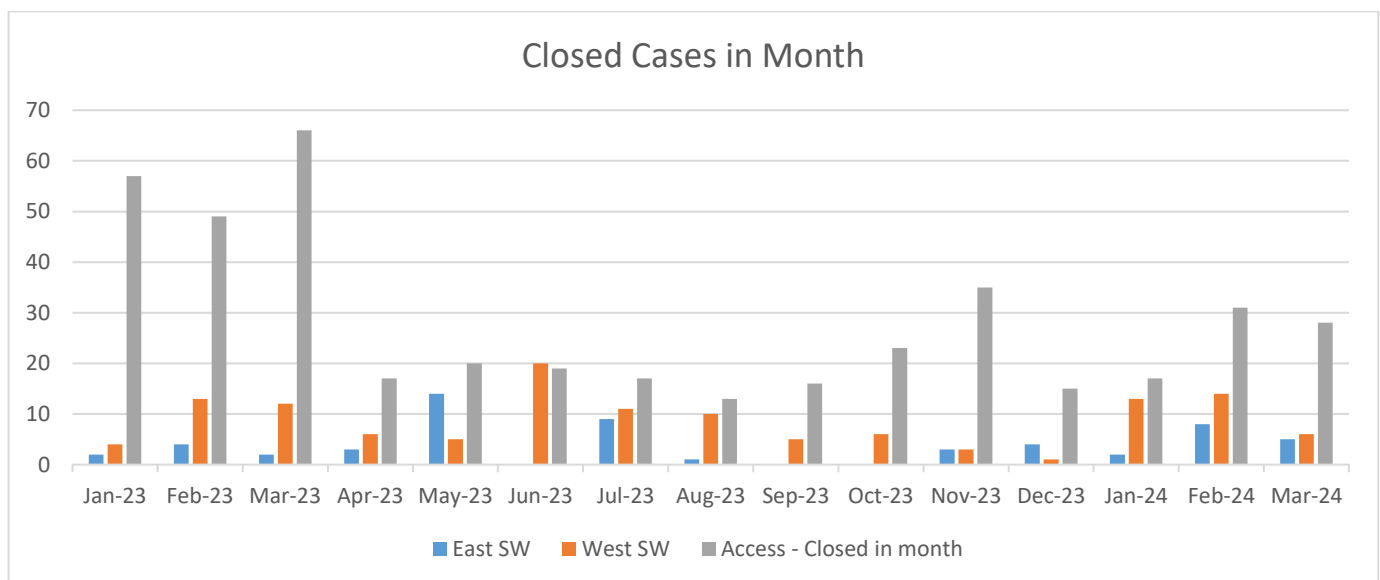
Referrals directly from the Police are recorded on a Vulnerable Person Database (VPD) following attendance at an incident when they wish to raise a concern about children at risk of harm. A VPD records a unique reference number for each incident which may relate to more than one child.



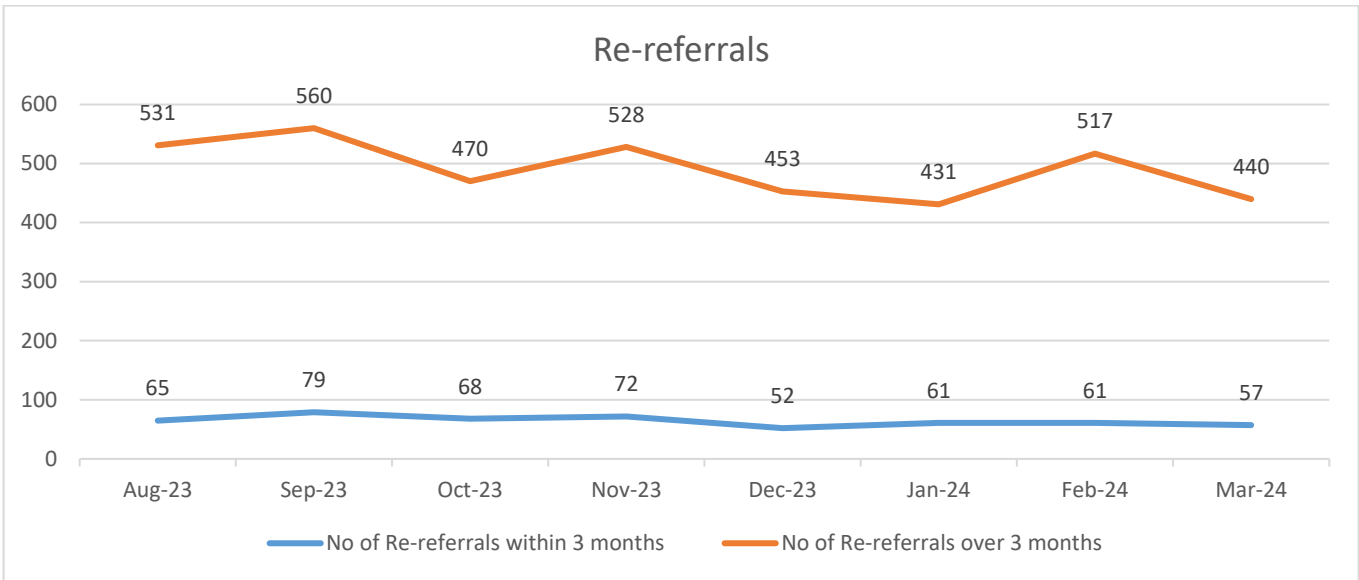
The Access Team consistently open significantly more new cases than both Area Team West and Area Team East due to their role in being the first point of contact.



As discussed earlier in this report, the Access Team have continued to review and reinforce the case management process. There has been a stronger focus on reviewing assessments, planning and interventions together with ensuring closure summaries are completed in order to provide a more robust process for closing cases.



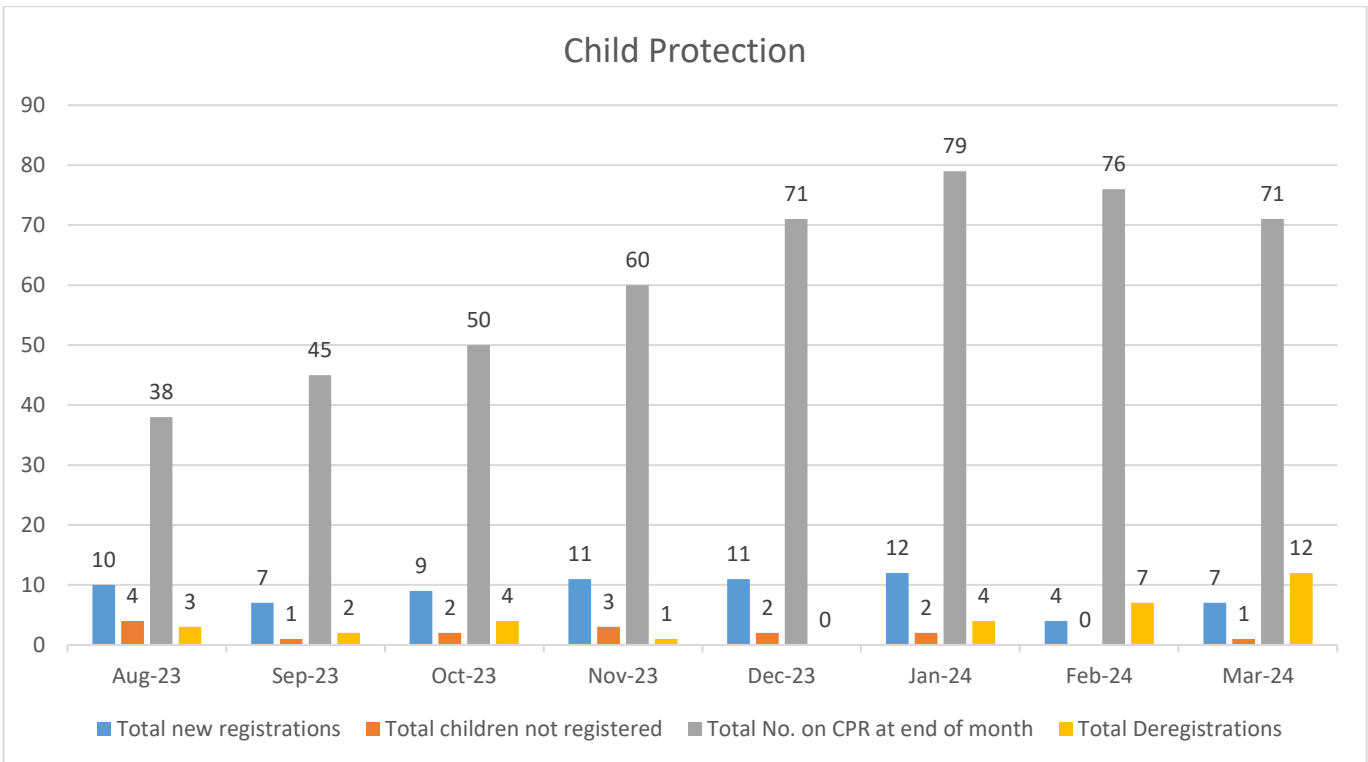
The number of re-referrals briefly rose in the middle of Q4, but has settled back to a point just above where it was at the end of Q3.



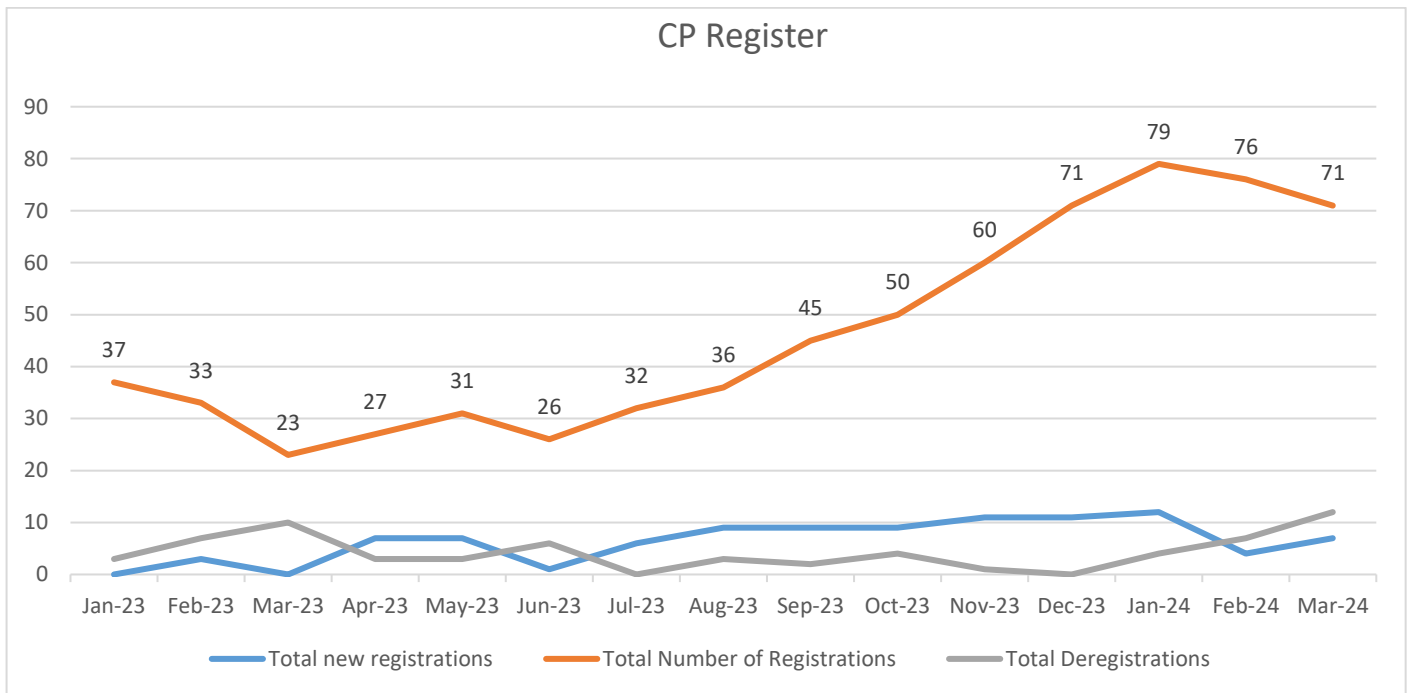
This may evidence our commitment to maintaining The Promise by providing our children and families with the right support at the right time. However, this remains an early stage in the process and will be subject to further analysis as we explore our data in the context of delivering The Promise.

## Child Protection

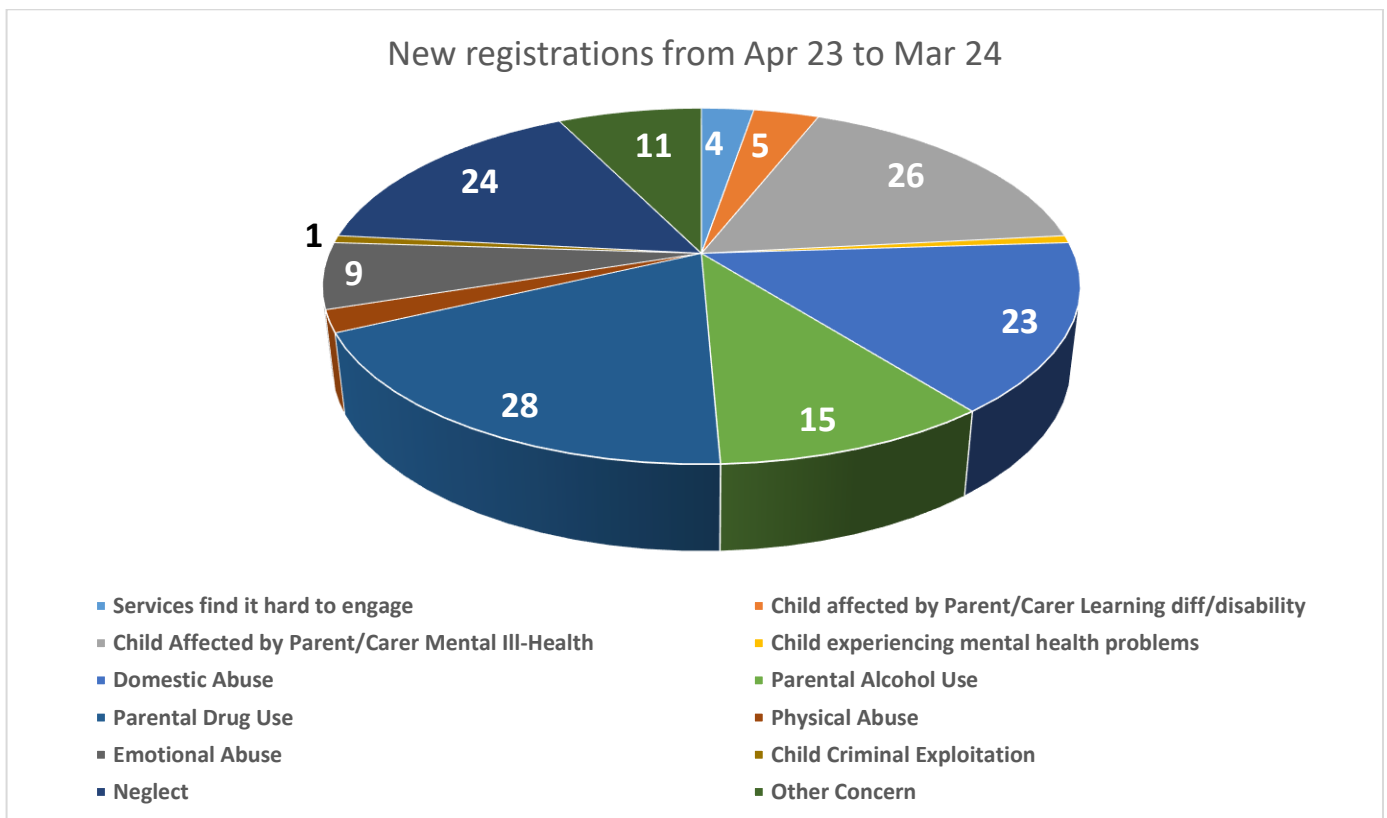
At the end of this Quarter, 71 children were registered on the North East Child Protection Register (CPR) at a rate of 3.9 per 1,000 of 0-17 population. There has been a steady increase in registrations across the year with an average of 9 new registrations per month.



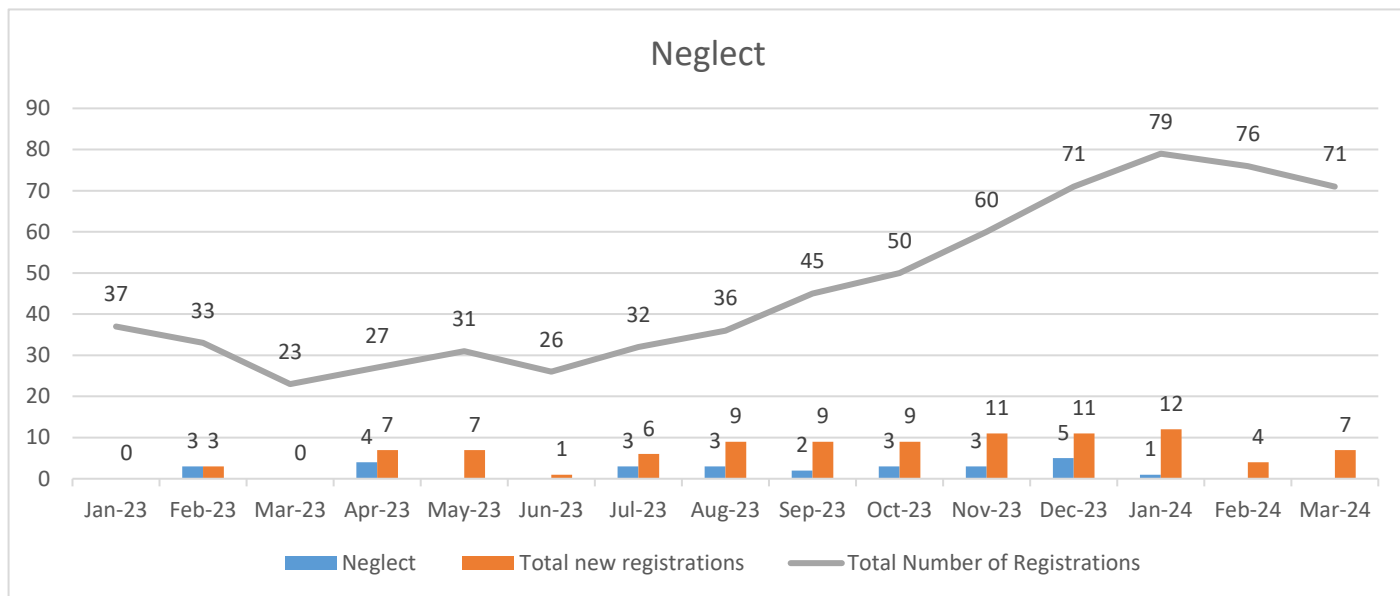
Child Protection registrations are agreed at a multi-agency child protection planning meeting that requires a quorate attendance to agree if a child should be registered and which category to register under. This multi-agency approach to child protection ensures that a decision is made from a holistic perspective.



The rising number of Child Protection registrations peaked in Jan 24 and has since decreased. Consideration for the reasons for this have been escalated and the multi-agency partnership is carrying out further investigation and analysis.



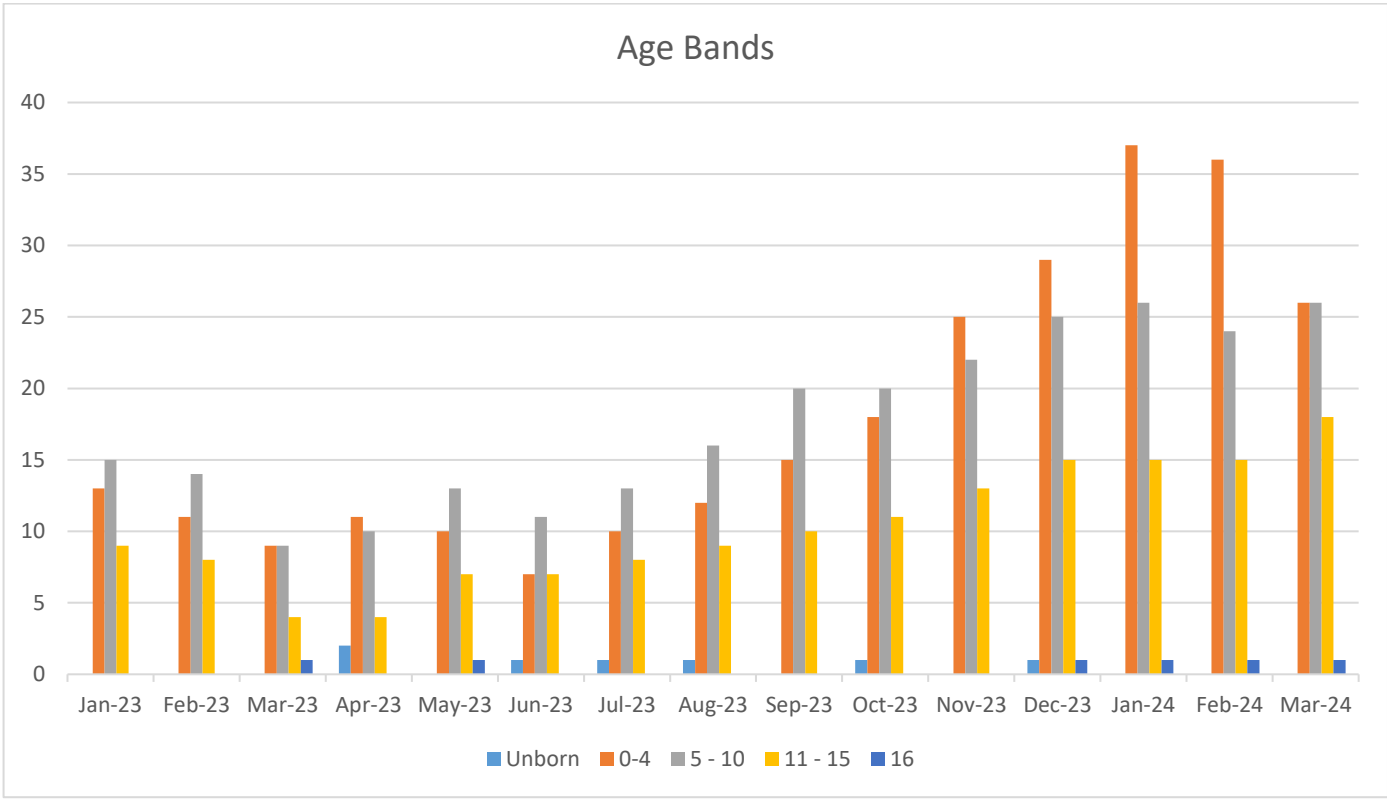
At the end of Quarter 4 almost a fifth of children (16/71, 22.5%) were on the Moray CPR due to neglect concerns. Children on the CPR due to neglect concerns have risen during 2023/24 with the most noticeable rise during Quarters 3 & 4, peaking at 23 cases. At the end of March 2023, 5 children were registered for neglect concerns. By the end of Quarter 4 this had increased to 16, (some were family groups). We have a very small number per head of population in relation to registration. As previously mentioned, the increase has been recognised and referred to the multi-agency partnership for further exploration and analysis.



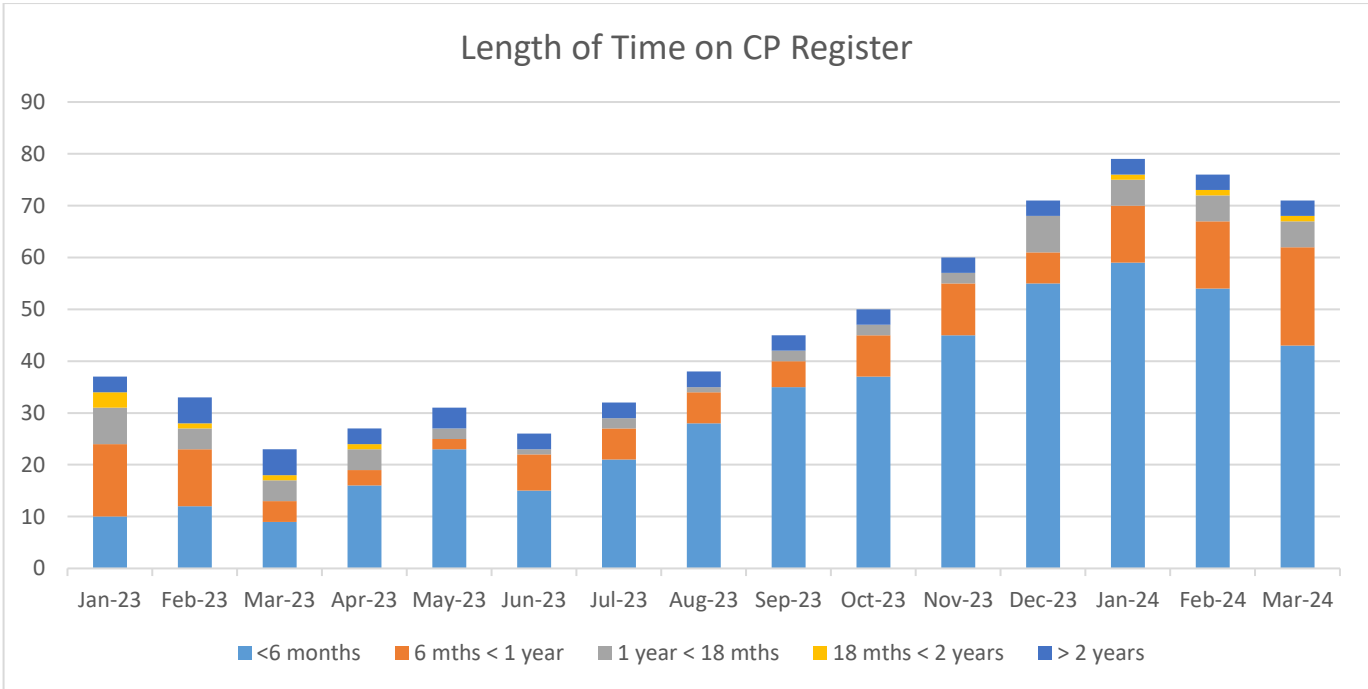
Neglect within a family setting is an area that we are keen to track. Currently, there is a lot of multi-agency activity within this area.

Multi-agency (Social Work, Health, Police, Education and Early Years) training has been provided to professionals for the Graded Care Profile. This is a tool used to identify complex forms of neglect and for quantifying neglect. This will support professionals to be able to measure the quality of care provided. Therefore, contributing to identification of neglect within families resulting in the category of neglect being used in CP registrations.

Furthermore, a nationwide NSPCC campaign may have elevated public knowledge and awareness of neglect, potentially leading to more referrals.



From this chart we can see that there has been a steady increase in registrations for children aged 0-4 although this has dipped in the final month of Quarter 4. We are also registering more young people over 16. The 5-10 category has also shown increase but not to the degree of the 0-4 age band. We are curious about this rise and are currently reviewing this along with the team who chair Child Protection Planning meetings to explore this trend.

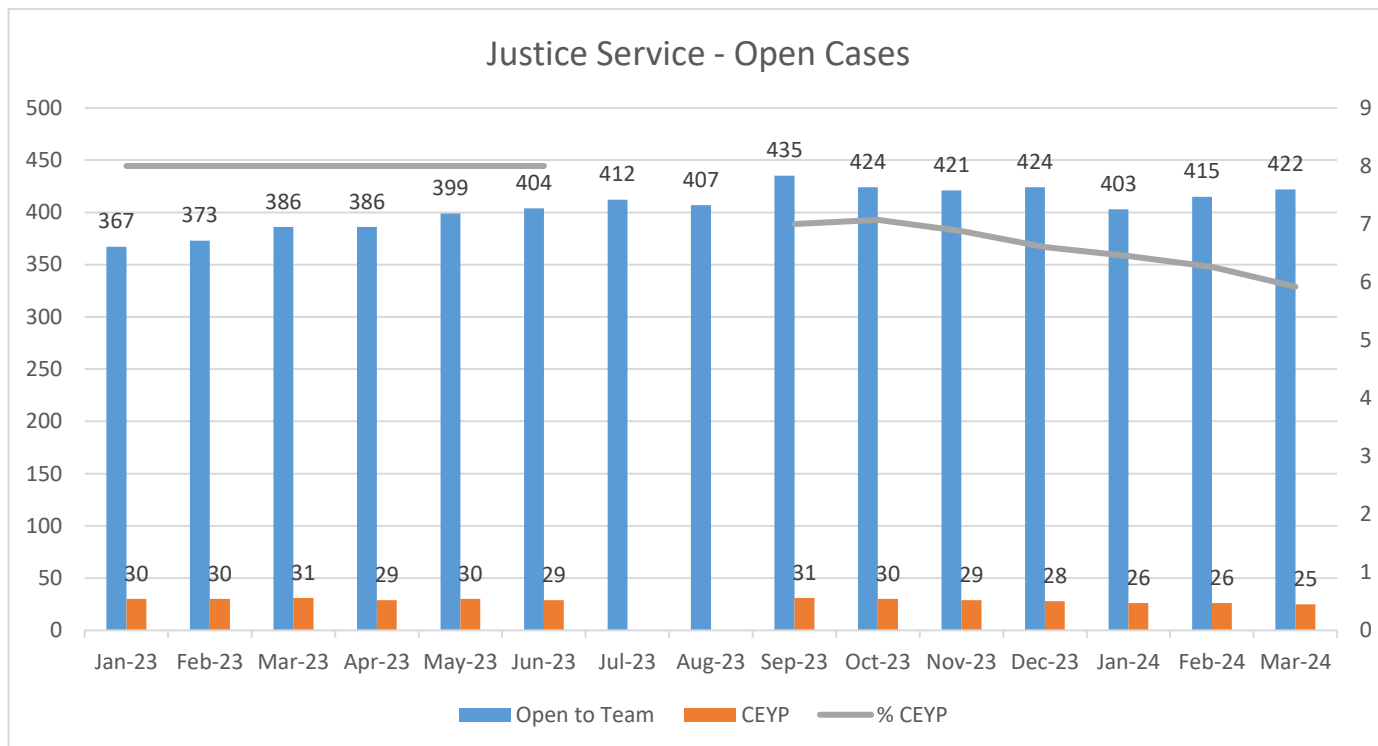




As at the end of Quarter 4, the proportion of children on the CPR for periods exceeding 12 months is 12.7%, Children who are on the CPR for a period of longer than 18 months are all reviewed to ensure that this remains the right plan for them.

The Quality Assurance Team continue to monitor and together with Service Managers, they review progress of plans and any challenges that are preventing sustained improvements.

## Justice Services



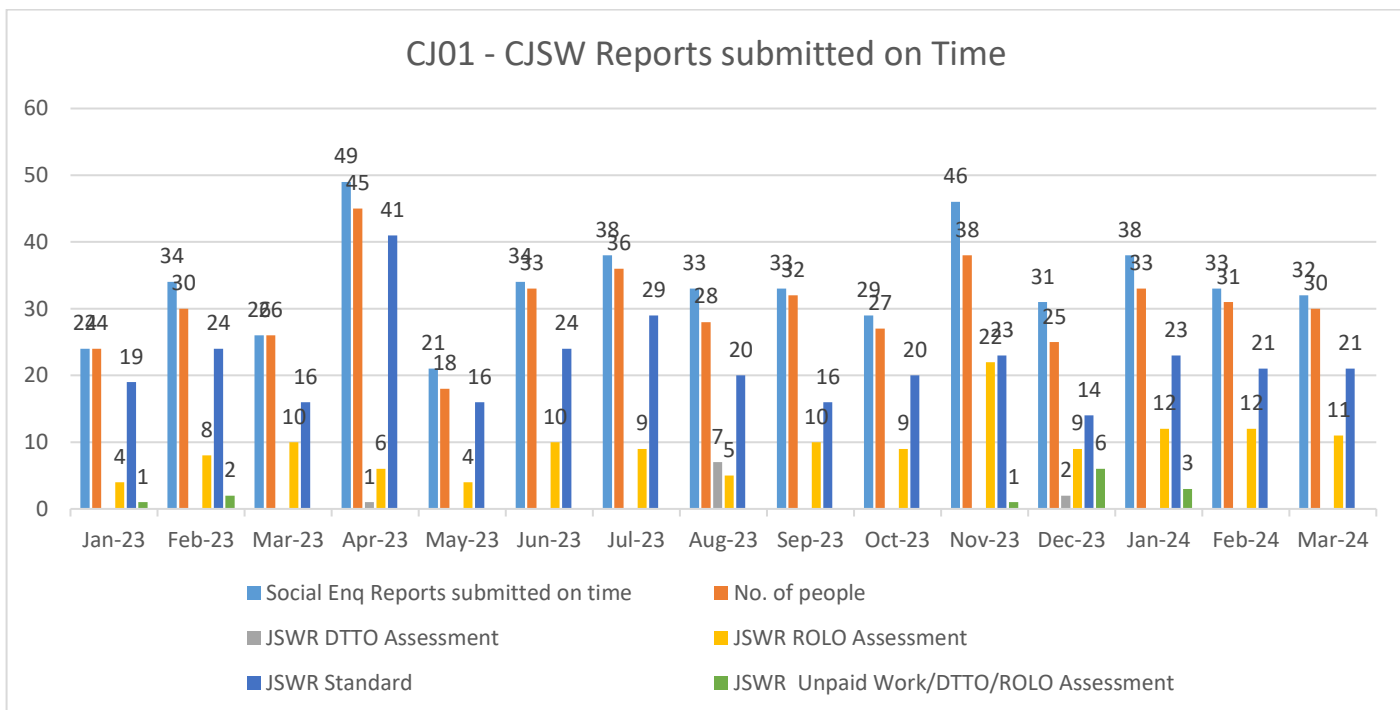
\*Note, there was an error in recording CEYP numbers from July to August 2023\*

At the end of quarter 4, this graph indicates the number of cases open to justice services (422) of whom 25 are care experienced young people CEYP (5.9% of open cases are CEYP). The number of care experienced young people has shown a gradual decline although rising caseloads in general affect the percentage.

The number of CEYP in both Justice Service and Youth Justice has been on a reducing trend from 13% at the end of March 2021.

At the end of Quarter 4, 39 of 467 (8.5%) were care experienced children within the justice systems (Youth Justice = 14, Justice Social Work = 25) showing a drop from 9.5% at end of Quarter 3. This has consistently remained below 12% throughout 2023/24 and continued to decrease.

Work continues to identify and support care experienced young people within the services, in order to offer early interventions where possible and reduce the risk of re-offending.



The Justice Social Work service continues to submit all reports to Courts by their due date. This includes requests from our local Court and nationally.

**Community Payback Orders** (with a supervision requirement should be seen by a supervising officer within one week). At the end of Quarter 4, 100% of individuals were seen within one week of the order being imposed to sign their Court Order during the quarter. The monthly target has improved over the year.

Court social workers attend the local Court to have contact post sentence with a follow up appointment is arranged with the supervising social worker. Three individuals were in custody which prevented contact being made in person. On other occasions Court paperwork was not available within the timescales and there were missed appointments due to a variety of reasons including paid employment and illness.

### Bail Supervision

During Quarter 4 there have been 34 bail supervision assessments completed with a total of 7 bail supervisions being imposed for 1 female and 6 males.

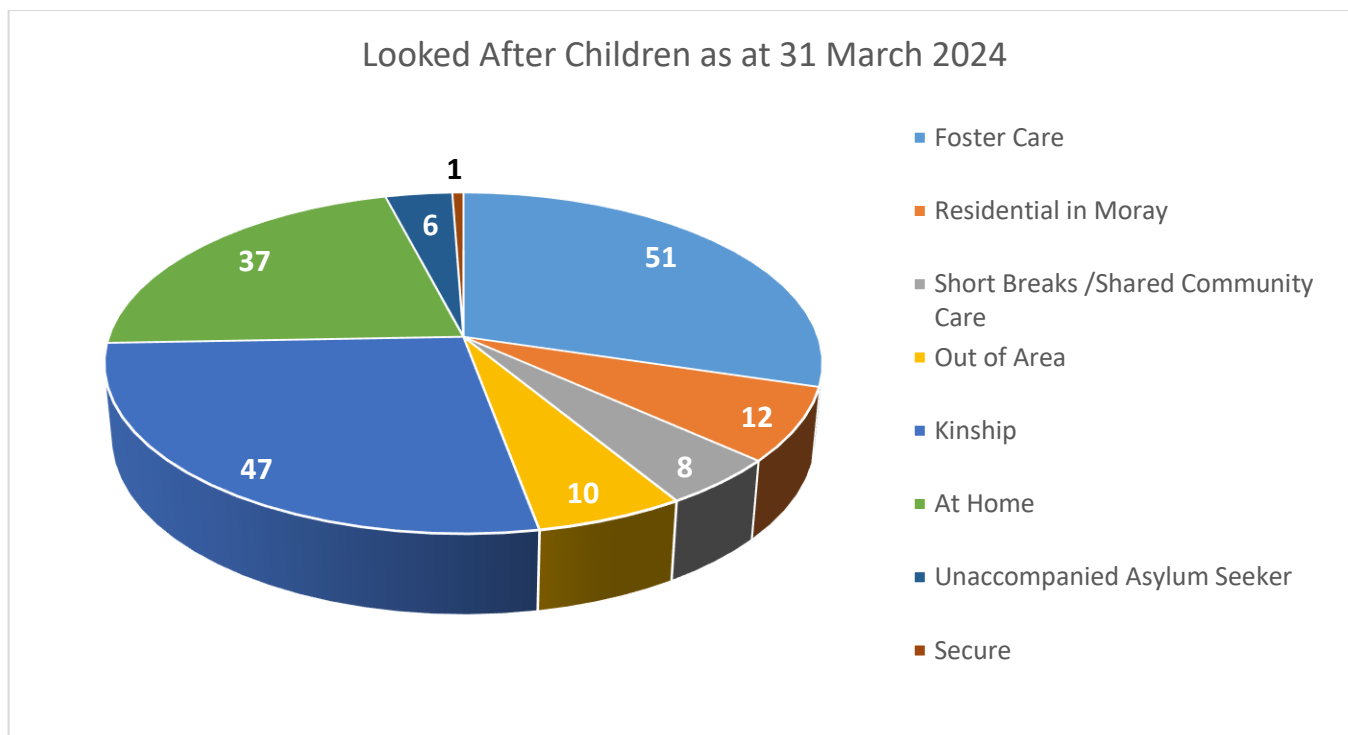
### Structured Deferred Sentences

Of the 89 Justice Social Work Reports completed within this quarter, 20 of these resulted in a Structured Deferred sentence being imposed with a further report being required within 3-6 months. This is an interim disposal which allows an individual an opportunity to engage prior to a final disposal by the Court being made. This is especially prioritised for younger people, females, those with issues such as mental health and addiction and CEYP. This also allows CEYP individuals an opportunity to engage with services and receive support which may prevent a formal Order being imposed.

## Looked After Children

Rate/1,000 0-17 population.

At the end of quarter 4, the number of looked after children was 9.67 per 1,000 of 0-17 population. This is lower than the national average (12.3) based on the most recent comparator statistics which date from 2021-22. It should be noted that the target will have changed for 2022-23 and we await release of this by the Scottish Government in May 2024.



Statistically it is difficult to ascertain how other authorities record their numbers as the level of detail is not readily available. While nationally significant, the numbers of looked after children are comparatively small which can provide significant percentage variance.

An example of this is that in Moray, we consider all Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and Short-term respite breaks within our Looked After numbers. We are aware that not all Comparator authorities do this. We are currently undertaking an exercise to consider what our comparator authorities record.

At the end of Quarter 4, the total number of looked after children (172) included 14 children who would be considered as UASC or needing short term respite breaks which represents 8% of our total looked after cohort.

The indicator is derived from the local government annual returns which is submitted to Scottish Government each autumn. The target represents the median of our comparator authorities and is adjusted annually hence the latest target of 9.3 per 1000 of 0-17 population which is the 2021-22

target. If we remove UASC and children needing short term respite breaks, we achieve the current target of 9.23.

## **Compulsory Supervision Orders**

At the end of Quarter 4, a total of 75 children were subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order directing their care, alongside 38 who were secured with a Permanence Order in a long-term foster or kinship placement.

The rate of looked after children subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders is 6.4, (113 children), per 1000 of 0–17-year population. The short-term trend shows a stable rate with a variance of 0.9 across the past 2 years. The long-term trend has decreased from a 9.9 (187/208 children) to 6.4 (113/172 children) at the end of the current Quarter.

## **Foster Care**

The target for this indicator is adjusted annually to the median of comparator authorities (2021-22 5.3%). At 3.5% the proportion of Looked after children in purchased Foster Care placements has met the target.

The numbers of children and young people with external foster carers are low (6) and reflect a period where there was a shortage of in-house foster carers. These are historical cases where young people in these placements have subsequently been matched with their carers and become subject to Permanence Orders securing their long term care arrangements. This reflects the needs and wishes of the children and young people as part of a trauma informed approach. Currently, Moray has improved our ability to place children and young people with in-house foster carers.

There is a Carer Recruitment Campaign in place which has a focus on the recruitment of foster carers and supported lodgings carers. This has resulted in an increase in the number of approvals of carers. As a result of this, there has been an improved ability to place children and young people with in-house foster carers. This has reduced the need to purchase agency foster care placements. The Carer Recruitment Campaign is ongoing where it is anticipated that the use of in-house carers will continue to increase.

## **Kinship Care**

The target for this indicator is adjusted annually to the median of comparator authorities (25.1% 2021/22). 27.3% of looked after children in Moray are in approved Kinship care with family members. This has increased from the previous Quarter.

There has been an increased focus on Kinship Care and the need to support children and young people to be cared for in their network of family and friends. It is recognised that Kinship Care

placements need to be supported and there has been the introduction of commissioned services which are available to these families. There has also been the introduction of Recommended Allowances for Kinship and Foster Carers which will improve the financial position for Kinship Care Placements.

## **Residential**

There are 14 residential beds within Moray's estate. Six beds are within two houses in Moray Council's Children's Home Cala and eight within two houses in Elgin and Buckie areas. This is provided through a contract with Action for Children.

One young person returned to parental care this quarter and one young person has a planned move into a tenancy early in Quarter 4 2023-24. There were two new planned admissions to the house in Buckie during Quarter 4 2023-24.

The target for this indicator is adjusted annually to the median of comparator authorities (17.5% 2021/22). In Moray, 18% of our looked after children are cared for within residential accommodation, however, this figure includes eight children cared for on a short-term respite basis.

As explained earlier in this report, not all local authorities include respite breaks in their figures and without the short-term figures, the percentage is 13.9% which is an improved figure compared to comparator authority median.

Not all local authorities record this measure in the same way where Moray may be reporting a higher rate as it includes both full-time and short breaks placements. Moray is committed to providing family placements to those children and young people who cannot be cared for at home.

## **Out of Area Placements**

One young person was placed in an Out of Area placement during Quarter 3 and not returned to Moray. Over the course of 2023/24, to date three young people have been accommodated in an Out of Area placement (2 in Q1 and 1 in Q3) and three have returned to Moray (2 in Q1 and 1 in Q2).

The Placement Oversight Meeting continues to monitor Out of Area placements with a focus on returning children and young people to Moray. This is supported by the work of the Carer Recruitment Campaign which is increasing the number of in-house fosters carers and supported lodgings carers. For Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, Moray has not adopted the model used by other local authorities of using residential homes. Its model comprises local authority housing and supported lodgings placements. As such, the uncertainty regarding the future numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children should not have an impact upon residential placements for Moray.

## Secure Care

There were two young people in Secure care during the reporting period. One looked after young person remained in a secure placement at the end of quarter 4 while a second person left care shortly before the end of the Quarter. This figure is below the target set from the Children Looked After Statistics (CLAS) annual return 2021-22 at 1%.

Both young people were transferred from a Young Offenders' Institute at the direction of the Procurator Fiscal which is considered best practice. The costs for the placement are also transferred from the government to the local authority.

There is an ongoing commitment to reduce the number of Looked After Children. This involves training for staff and the commissioning of services to support children remaining with their parents and families. The numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children will continue to increase in both Moray and across Scotland. These numbers are decided by the Home Office where local authority influence is limited.

## Staffing

Job descriptions and team structures within local authorities in Scotland differ. This makes it difficult to compare team complements on a like for like basis by description of post.

Scottish Government places similar local authorities into family groups of 8. Our closest local comparable local authority is Angus.

Angus has 14 Senior Social Workers; 62 main grade Social Workers; 9 Service Managers and 3 Heads of Service in comparison to Moray where we have 12 Senior Social Workers; 50 main grade Social Workers; 5 Service Managers and 1 Head of Service.

### **WTE rates for Children & Families Social Work Fieldwork Staff per 1,000 children (0-17)**

If we use all levels of Social Work posts with a SSSC registration to enable accurate comparison between authorities this gives Angus a figure of 416 per 100,000 compared to Moray on 370.

There is a complication that job descriptions in the survey do not show the same type of post. Not all local authorities have Senior Social Workers but may call a similar post a Team Leader.

In Placement Services a Team Manager started their post in Quarter 3. This role was with a focus on fostering, adoption and kinship. This Team Manager role has a particular focus on supporting and increasing the provision of carers including foster carers and kinship carers. This is with a view to reducing the reliance upon paid placements (foster care and residential care) and supporting children and young people remaining in Moray.

A newly appointed Team Manager for Justice has also been in post during Quarter 3 with responsibility for the adult Justice Social Work team, including the Unpaid Work Service within that.

## **Commissioning Team**

This quarter the commissioning team have been scrutinising the contract monitoring returns from the providers and producing comparator reports for Q1-Q3 2023/24. The scrutiny has led to enhanced contract monitoring for one provider and further clarification from other providers. The details have been compiled in reports which were issued to the contract lead officer, discussed at the Policy, Development & Commissioning meeting with the wider social work management team, and submitted to the Head of Service.

The reports were further enhanced by the family support services survey which was launched by the commissioning team in January. Twenty-one responses were received from the front-line social workers with rich comments providing another perspective on the contracts.

Social and added value (benefits with no additional cost to the Council) update reports have been created this quarter and issued to all providers. The commissioning team used the successful providers response to the tender question “please detail the social value and added value available through your company for this contract”. The template for each report contains all points received from the providers tender response, with space for them to update on what they have delivered in relation to the social and added value benefits of the contract. This information will be returned with the Q4 report submissions by 14/04/2024.

Scotland Excel are the centre of expertise for their frameworks, and it is their frameworks we use for residential placement and education, including short breaks. The young people placed there are done using an Individual Placement Agreement (IPA), but the commissioning team identified a gap in receiving some contractual data back from the placements. A short template was created to gather transition information, their vacancies (to assist for future and other placements), their reflections, risks & mitigating actions, comments / service feedback, complaints, incidents, restraints / safe holds / seclusions and the young person’s views. This system will also be used for placements through Moray council framework providers for residential services who have young people placed using an IPA.

Eight IPAs are currently being redrafted; this is due to a number of them expiring on 31/03/2024. The commissioning team are working collaboratively with the social workers to ensure the information is accurate, updated prior to obtaining the approvals from the budget holders and sending to the providers. During this quarter there was one placement at a secure care centre, the IPA was completed within the legal timeframes.

The short breaks tender was due to be awarded this quarter, but the one bid received was unaffordable. Consultation with the provider is ongoing as the budget has been significantly impacted by two emergency placements and considerations for their next placements. To ensure this contract does not expire non compliantly, discussions are ongoing with the provider and procurement.

The children's advocacy service (known as Moray Children's Rights Service) with Quarriers which commenced 16/10/2023 are experiencing capacity issues due to demand. The contract is split into 2 lots, lot 1 for the child / young person and lot 2 for their parent / carer/ sibling, as this is the first time we have offered advocacy lot 2 referrals were an unknown. Their first contract monitoring return covers the period 16/10/2023 – 31/12/2023 and they reported 113 referrals. Children and young people made up 70 of the 113 and their parents / carers / siblings 43 out of 113. This service received more referrals in 10 weeks than the same service in Falkirk in one year. At a contract meeting with Quarriers at the end of January 2024, they advised there had been a further 50 referrals in January. Capacity of the contract is a risk and has been escalated to Practice Governance Board (PGB) and noted on 19/01/2024 following discussion at Policy, Development & Commissioning on 12/01/2024.

On 01/01/2024 the Unpaid Carers contract commenced. The commissioning team are offering support to Quarriers through the transition and will continue to meet with them. Due to the contract value remaining the same, Quarriers have included maximum Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements to be completed annually. This will be monitored and escalated if required.

The commissioning team have developed a specification for Children with a disability – Group activities in collaboration with the shorter life working group. This is to utilise the budgets from the previous Safer, Stronger Families and Cornerstone contracts.