

Children Services Performance Spotlight Report – Re-referrals & Assessment

November 2024



southampton.gov.uk



Children
& Learning
Making a difference



SOUTHAMPTON
CITY COUNCIL

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Re-referrals audit summary | 3 |
| Re-referrals action plan | 4 |
| Assessments Data for September | 5 |
| Assessment commentary and remedial action | 6 |

Re-referrals audit summary

In August & September 2024, managers across Children Services undertook audits for children who had been referred in through CRS within 12 months of a previous referral. A group of auditors met with the Director of Children's Social Care to review the findings. 39 audits were allocated, 85% were completed.

In summary, 39% of families were referred for new circumstances or needs that were not present or concerning during the previous period of intervention. 61% families were re-referred for similar concerns.

Of these, 59% were due to domestic abuse, 35% for risk outside of the home, and 6% due to neglect.

A similar audit was undertaken in February 2024 that identified the emerging positive impact of the Safe and Together model. We now have adult facing domestic abuse workers within each locality team in Family Safeguarding.

The findings identified the following areas for focus:

1. Working with perpetrators and survivors of domestic abuse.
 - Seeing incidents and behaviours described in contacts to the CRS as a pattern of behaviour rather than isolated incidents. Understanding that retractions of allegations is not reduction in risks or evidence.
 - Working with survivors when they initially deny any concerns or do not agree to an assessment or intervention
 - Ensuring assessments with families where a perpetrator of domestic abuse is within the family environment are informed by the Safe and Together approach, including post-separation risk assessments.
2. Working with children at risk outside of the family home
 - Gaining consent from the family when initially referred, how can this be overcome when referrals are from police, or based on intelligence
 - Timeliness of initial visits and assessments
3. Quality of closure of records
 - Ongoing plan for meeting remaining needs should be clear, including extended network and lead professional
 - Clarity of decision making and professional network views and engagement
 - Updating case summaries, chronologies and genograms

Re-referrals action plan

Domestic Abuse

- Staff training needs analysis to be undertaken by the Workforce Academy
- Identification of good practice examples of the Safe and Together(S&T) model in practice to be used to support practice development.
- Domestic Abuse practice month is being planned for early 2025
- S&T champions to support practice within teams alongside IDVA and male engagement workers.

Risk Outside the Home

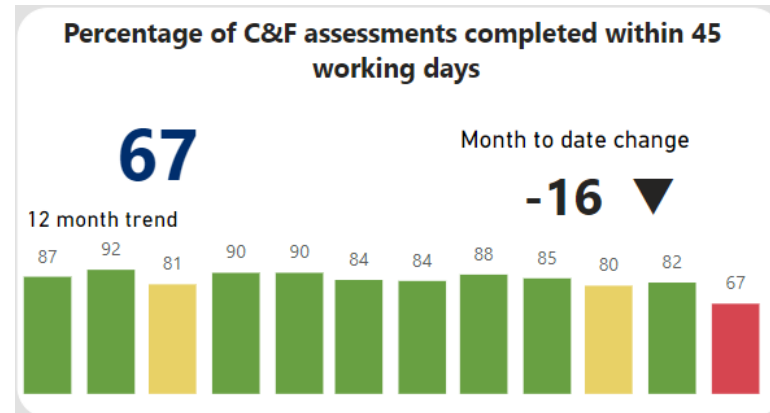
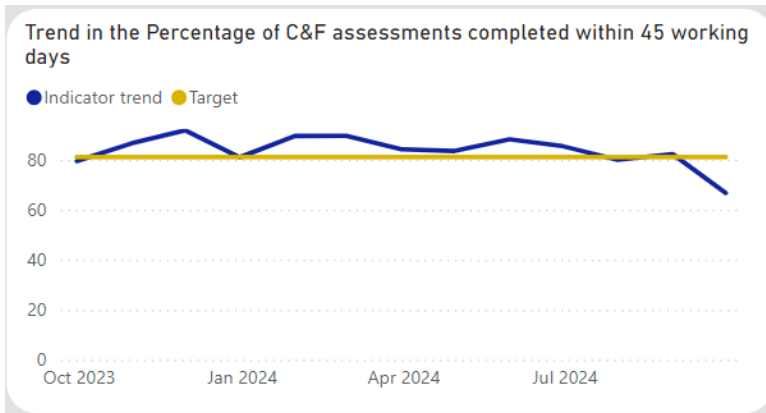
- New team has been created within the Youth Justice Service to deliver the ROTH context approach and focussed deterrent work. This is led by Laura Tanner, a context experienced manager who has been leading the ROTH approach to child protection conferences.

Closure Records

- Updated guidance will be drafted and shared with Managers and Staff. Follow up sessions will be held with teams to review the expectations.
- A follow up audit on the quality of closure records will be held three months after the training concludes.

Assessment data for September

Statutory assessments of families open to children services are expected to be completed within 45 working days. This measure is reported on monthly and comparable nationally and with statistical neighbours. Our current target is 81%, in line with the statistical neighbour average.

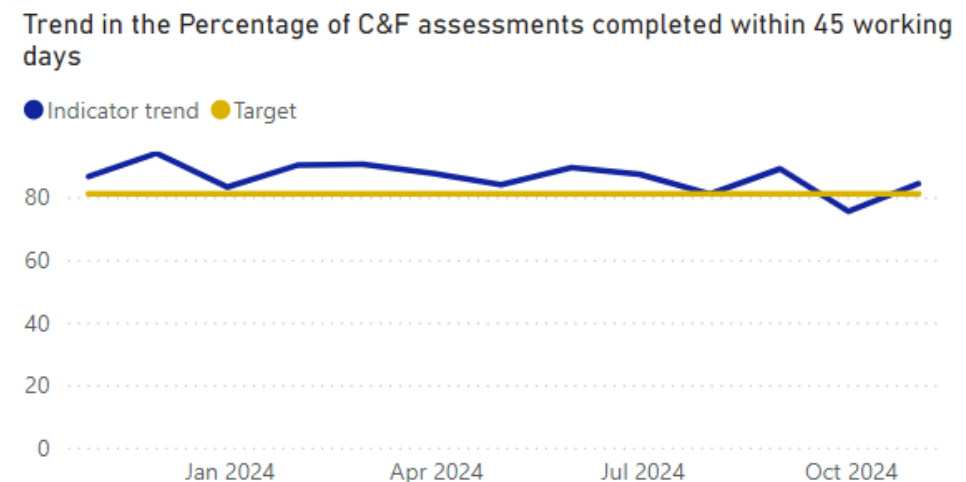
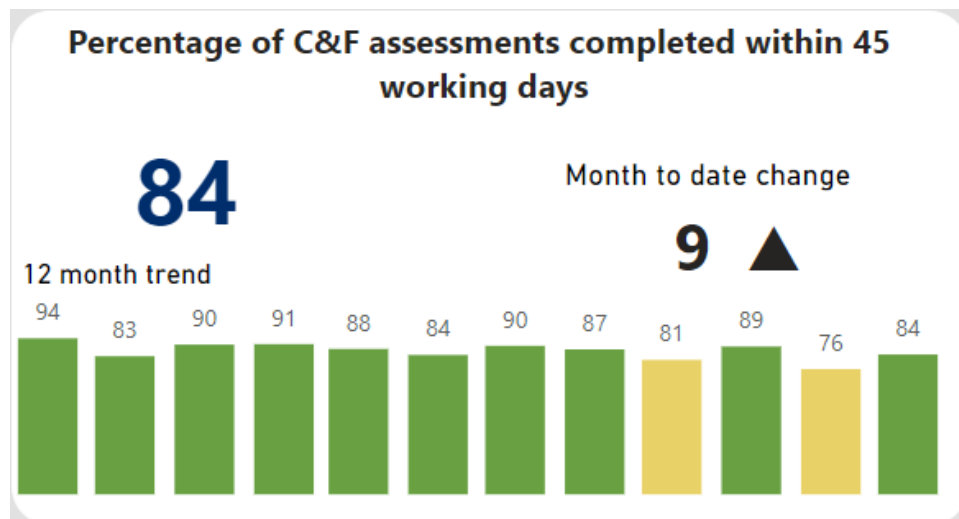


Usually, Southampton achieve at or above the target for this measure, but in September we dipped to 67%. Assessment timeliness was discussed in assurance clinics with every part of the service. It was identified that the data was incorrectly counting assessments completed on the final day as being out of time, and this improved performance to 76%. However, Senior Leadership requested specific focus on this issue with the management teams to identify any underlying issues.

| Team/Locality | Denominator | Numerator | % |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| Children in Care 1 | 3 | 2 | 66.7% |
| Children in Care 2 | 3 | 2 | 66.7% |
| CRS | 2 | 1 | 50.0% |
| Family Help Central 1 | 1 | 1 | 100.0% |
| Family Help Central 1 - CA | 18 | 14 | 77.8% |
| Family Help Central 2 - CA | 1 | 1 | 100.0% |
| Family Help East 1 | 4 | 2 | 50.0% |
| Family Help East 1 - CA | 11 | 1 | 9.1% |
| Family Help East 2 - CA | 6 | 3 | 50.0% |
| Family Help West 1 | 4 | 4 | 100.0% |
| Family Help West 1 - CA | 17 | 17 | 100.0% |
| Family Help West 2 | 1 | 1 | 100.0% |
| Family Help West 2 - CA | 13 | 4 | 30.8% |
| Family Safeguarding Central | 5 | 5 | 100.0% |
| Family Safeguarding East 1 | 2 | 1 | 50.0% |
| Family Safeguarding East 2 | 8 | 8 | 100.0% |
| Family Safeguarding West 1 | 17 | 4 | 23.5% |
| Family Safeguarding West 2 | 3 | 3 | 100.0% |
| Jigsaw 1 | 8 | 8 | 100.0% |
| Jigsaw 2 | 7 | 5 | 71.4% |
| Jigsaw 3 | 6 | 6 | 100.0% |
| Young People Team 1 | 7 | 6 | 85.7% |
| Young People Team 2 | 3 | 1 | 33.3% |
| Total | 150 | 100 | 66.7% |

Assessment commentary and remedial action

In October, the data shows an improvement to 84% of assessments completed within 45 days. It also reflects the correction in the calculation for September, increasing to 76%. Given the increased activity in October due to the high number of referrals, this demonstrates managers focus on assessment timeliness.



As assessment activity increases, we expect to see a higher number of assessments completing in November, managers are focussed on the quality and timeliness of these to ensure that the needs of children and families are identified, risks are assessed, and plans address needs and reflect the strengths of the family and wider network.

We are also looking carefully at the impact of the new service design through purposeful management meetings. One was held in November, with further scheduled for December and January.



**Children
& Learning**
Making a difference

