

Service Quality Unit

Annual Report 2022-23



[Contents](#)

The Vision for our Service Quality Unit.....	4
Service Quality Unit Principles.....	4
Background and Team Profile.....	5
Team Profile.....	5
Caseloads.....	6
Service Overview.....	6
Looked After Children Review.....	10
Annual Performance and Measures.....	11
Children’s Participation.....	13
Care Experienced young people feedback about their lives and what matters to them.....	14
Dispute Resolution Process.....	16
Health Assessments of Looked After Children.....	16
Personal Education Plans Received.....	17
Child Protection Register.....	18
Reviews Held.....	20
Annual Performance and Measures.....	21
Children Participation in Child Protection Conferences.....	22
SQU Analysis.....	23
Our Objectives / Plan to Achieve.....	26

The Vision for our Service Quality Unit

Having someone just for you, who listens, supports, and understands you, so you have a voice.

Service Quality Unit Principles

We will –

- Meet with you, build a relationship with you and prepare and support you for your meetings
- Help you be the best you can be
- Listen to and understand what matters to you
- Bring together the right people to help make things happen to support you
- Ensure that everyone understands how and why they are supporting me
- Keep a record of your meeting and share it with you

As a service we continue to focus on working towards the Corporate Parenting pledge “what a best life” looks like for our care experienced population focusing on the 7 key areas -

- No barriers to opportunity
- Good education/good job
- Healthy relationships
- Safe place to live
- Mental health
- Love, family and friendship
- Happiness

This annual report is to be presented to members of the Child and Family Scrutiny Performance Panel in line with the Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance (Wales) 2004 and Swansea Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives. This report identifies good practice and issues for further development, including those where action is required. This guidance supports the Local Authority to make effective use of the reports so that it can be satisfied that its service can achieve better outcomes for the families, children and young people concerned.

Background & Team Profile

The appointment of Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) by Local Authorities is a legal requirement and their core functions are governed by Legislation. The Local Authority has a duty to appoint an IRO to have effective oversight of a child's case and ensure that the child's interests are protected through the care planning. Since the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in 2016, the duty now extends to monitoring the child's whole case, not just their review.

In addition to the IRO role, they also are responsible for facilitating initial and review child protection case conferences. Under the Safeguarding Procedures 2014 it specifically sets out the responsibilities of the Conference Chair that they need to be independent of operational or line management responsibility of the case, trained in child protection and be objective.

This report covers the performance of the team from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. It also includes information on children subject to a Child Protection Plan and reviews of these plans at Child Protection Case Conferences. All IRO/CP Chairs undertake dual functions chairing looked after children reviews and/or child protection conferences. The current IRO's have a wealth of experiences and knowledge and have been qualified social workers for at least 3 years.

This report also includes information that relates to regulatory requirements in respect of the IRO role which includes the Dispute Resolution process, IRO/CP caseloads, challenges and achievements, participation and consultation of children and young people in their reviews, and service priorities. It also includes Child Protection data.

Team Profile –

1 x Team Manager

1 x Assistant Team Manager

10 x Full Time Staff (one on long term sickness and one on a secondment)

4 x Part time staff.

Caseloads -

The average caseload for each full-time member of staff was approximately 75-80 cases in total. This is made up of approx. 50-55 Looked after Children and 25-30 children on the Child Protection Register.

Service Overview

What is working well?	What are we worried about?
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Regional partnership working continues to take place with National Youth Advocacy Service, Child and Family Commissioning Team, Supported Care Planning teams to capture data and ensure the active offer of advocacy is being made and taken up by our children and young people.2. There was an increase from 11.91% last year to 16.08% this year. 129 children over 5 years of age accepted the offer of advocacy.3. IRO/CP Chairs are asking the social workers and reminding them to have the conversation on advocacy and independent visitors at every meeting if they have not already done so.4. Supporting Children's Permanence group meets weekly to obtain an overview of all our care experienced children and young people's care and support plans. We identify if there are any themes, trends, good practice, drift, or delays or learning we can take to share with the service and senior managers.5. We have in conjunction with the Participation Officer held a participation event with children and young people to understand what matters to them and events will take place regularly through the coming months.6. Swansea is active in involving care experienced children in appointments of new staff which helps build their skills and experience. One young person told us <i>"I have never interviewed or offered someone a job before, it's made my year"</i>.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Our IT system (WCCIS) continues to be challenging in supporting us to capture data to help our learning around themes and trends as well as learning on children's outcomes. We are currently manually collating data, which is shared with Senior Managers.2. There are ongoing challenges in collecting the data from the current quality assurance monitoring forms. This data is a set of questions collected by the IRO after every meeting to help us measure the Local Authority performance and monitor outcomes for children and young people. We are working with the Learning and Innovation Team to help us extract this data via WCCIS as well as revise the current form which is awaiting programme changes on WCCIS.3. 10% of the quality assurance monitoring questions on participation were not reported on by the IRO, and we need to explore the barriers to this.4. We currently do not capture qualitative or quantitative data on children or young people attending their meetings or if they have been asked to attend, this is something that needs to be developed.5. We have increased the advocate support however we need to understand this more as a service and review if we can do anything differently as well as capture reasons why this service is not being used.

What is working well?	What are we worried about?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. 90% of our children and young people had a voice and were involved in some form of their review meetings. 8. The team have been creative in their thinking with four members of staff recording meetings in a letter form to children and young people. This continues to be reviewed and feedback from children and families continues to be gathered to help us to understand if we are achieving better outcomes for children. 9. Swansea has saved over £123,350.71 this financial year via the Share Foundation (ISA) for our care experienced children who we are corporate parents for to offer financial permanency for when they become an adult. This includes a Stepladder Plus scheme post 16 years old to help young people manage money and develop their budgeting skills. They must complete 6 stages of which they can gain an additional £1,500 into their account. Collectively they have added some money into their pot totalling £1,500. We will continue to publicise across the service in the coming year. A young person when asked what motivated them to get involved, he said <i>“The thought of extra money”</i>. 10. Cockett House has been decorated and developed to support children and young people into the building to make it inviting and welcoming and offer a safe space to have their meeting and chats with staff. 11. In collaboration with the Learning Innovation Team and WICCS we have redesigned some of our paperwork to support the IRO to have meaningful quality assurance documents to help gather data in evidencing the Local Authorities performance within care planning. 12. IRO maintained Welsh Government standards by completing and sharing their recommendations from the meeting within 5 working days. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. A small number of meetings were held out of time (8 LAC Reviews over the 12 months and 5 conferences) all of which were agreed via the Principal Officer for Safeguarding. This was due to staff sickness in the social work staff, late referrals, no report being available and conference not being quorate. 7. The WCCIS system is not reliable in capturing the number of health plans being completed and recorded as this is manually inputted and often stored as an attachment. Further development is needed to capture this data. 8. Our current IT system for collating data for Personal Education Plans only takes into account the ones we received within timescales and not those that were due to aid the care and support plan. 9. Some IROs have limited time due to their increase in volume of work set out in the IRO standards and codes of practice. Things like completing and recording children/young people midpoint reviews (this is a meeting with the social worker and IRO between statutory reviews to check that the recommendations that were generated from the meeting are being followed within timescales set). Work pressures across the board have increased due to placement challenges and this not only impacts directly on children and young people but also staff who must have an additional meeting to review the updated care and support plans. 10. We know from IROs and social workers that helpful conversations take place that go undocumented due to limitations in the WICCS system and time. These conversations are around care planning, trajectories, family time, and placement moves. In being able to capture this work, we would evidence the volume of work that goes on daily across the service, which is important to a child’s journey.

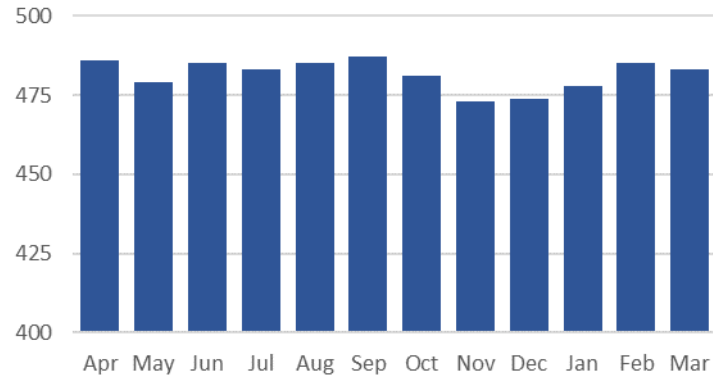
What is working well?	What are we worried about?
<p>13. All Swansea care experienced children reviews are held in the venue of the child or young person's choice. This can be Cockett House, school, placement, or other.</p> <p>14. Our care experienced population has remained stable over this financial year.</p> <p>15. The IROs have consistently undertaken 3-monthly reviews on care experienced children in residential care to maintain an oversight of their care plans.</p> <p>16. We continue to link with Parent Advocate Network (PAN) to take learning from their experiences and we continue to link with the co-ordinator to support this project.</p> <p>17. Formal conversations on cases with social workers and IROs regularly take place and recorded. We continue to have a low level of issuing protocols as it could be suggested that lots of support and discussions take place on children's care plans which are effective and prevent protocols being initiated.</p> <p>18. From the feedback we have received from the participation events (see comments below) IROs have listened to the comments about when the meetings are taking place, their involvement in their plan and the choice of biscuit! Going forward we will continue to address and explore creative ways of working to support participation in any way possible.</p> <p>19. Swansea was chosen to be part of the Child Protection Rapid Review with the Care Inspectorate Wales and coordinated feedback from professionals and families. These findings will be analysed to help us learn and achieve better outcomes.</p> <p>20. At every conference, a questionnaire is provided to family's and partner agencies to seek their views on the Child Protection process to help us learn and develop.</p> <p>21. Training workshops were held with Supported Care Planning staff facilitated by the Service Quality Unit on the conference process and</p>	<p>11. Young people tell us they do not see or co-produce their care and support plans and this needs to be reviewed to become a child friendly document. Children and young people need to have a copy, so that everyone knows what outcomes we are working to achieve.</p> <p>12. Young people tell us they want information via social media and updated technology rather than paper form. This is something we are getting them to help us with.</p> <p>13. Not all partner agencies (namely Police) attend CP meetings in person and staff and families tell us that hybrid meetings can be very problematic.</p> <p>14. Child Protection re-referrals have increased, ongoing work is required to dip sample case closures to check that contingency safety plans are being developed with families to be confident that de-registration for threshold was met and there is a contingency plan which everyone can follow.</p> <p>15. We worry that the safety plans developed within conference including the danger statements are not reviewed in core groups. On times there is no change in the plans or the language at a review conference. Within the next steps, the chairperson is asking for this to be actioned in the next core group. Discussions with the Learning and Innovation Team will take place to support staff going forward.</p> <p>16. Due to changes in the reporting systems from Paris to WCCIS, this changed the reporting mechanisms on how our data is captured and recorded. Going forward annual data will all be reported from WCCIS.</p>

What is working well?	What are we worried about?
<p>conference reports to raise practice standards and staff told us they found this useful.</p> <p>22. From September 2022 to January 2023 the Child Protection Chairperson supported undertaking statutory visits to children on the Child Protection Register to ensure safeguarding was maintained in Swansea.</p> <p>23. All Swansea Child Protection meetings were held in person in Cockett House and families tell us this is something important to them.</p> <p>24. Our Child Protection register numbers remained stable over this financial year.</p> <p>25. We were successful in having 16 young people attend their Child Protection Conferences and be very much part of their plans. This year is the first year we collected the data however going forward we aim to seek the views of those attending to help us learn from their experiences to encourage others to attend.</p> <p>26. We ensure that all our paperwork captures the voice of the child and views of those who have parental responsibility.</p> <p>27. Born into Care Wales provided the first analysis of infant and newborn babies in care proceedings in Wales. This study highlighted key findings that Swansea have embedded in their practice as of June 2022. In practice, Supported Care Planning are identifying cases sooner and in line with the findings and as a result, earlier referrals are being made for Initial Child Protection Case Conferences (ICPCC) to support care planning and safeguarding from the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>28. SQU have supported allocating all unborn ICPCC that have been referred over and as a service we are also convening an additional prebirth Review Child Protection Case Conference (RCPCC) to support having ongoing oversight of the care / safety plan.</p>	

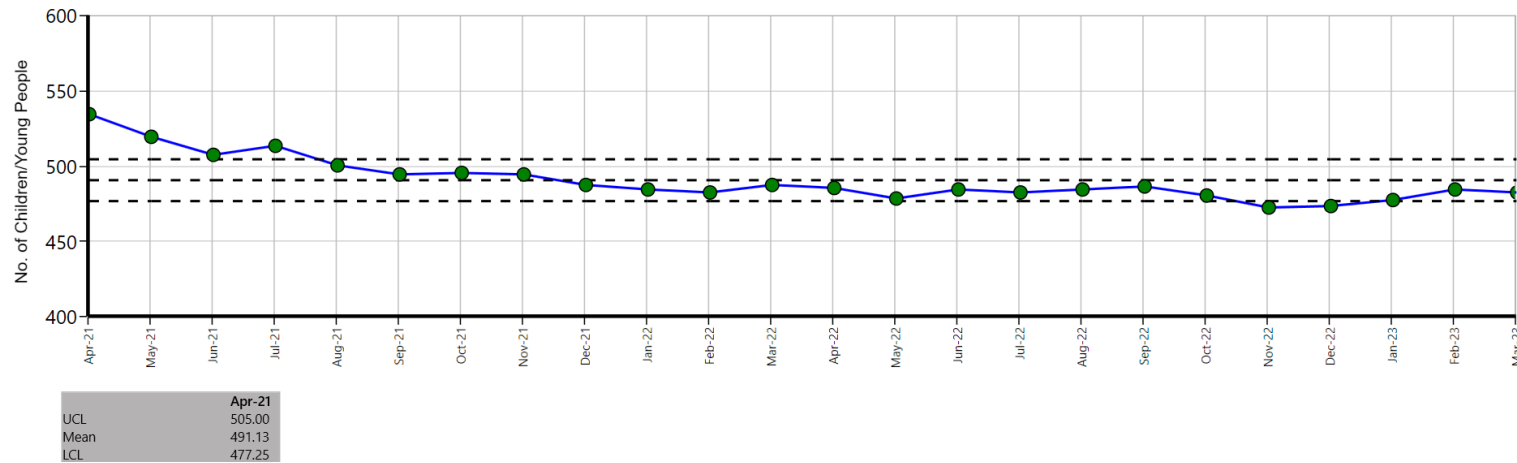
Looked After Children Reviews

Population Trend 2022-23

	LAC Population
Apr-22	486
May-22	479
Jun-22	485
Jul-22	483
Aug-22	485
Sep-22	487
Oct-22	481
Nov-22	473
Dec-22	474
Jan-23	478
Feb-23	485
Mar-23	483

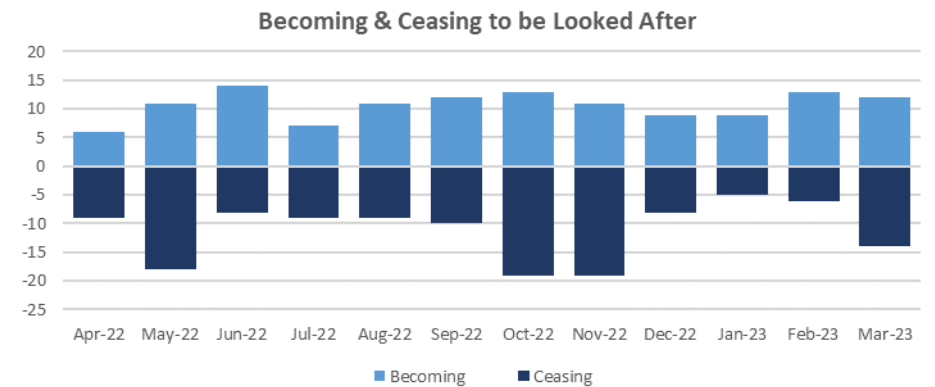
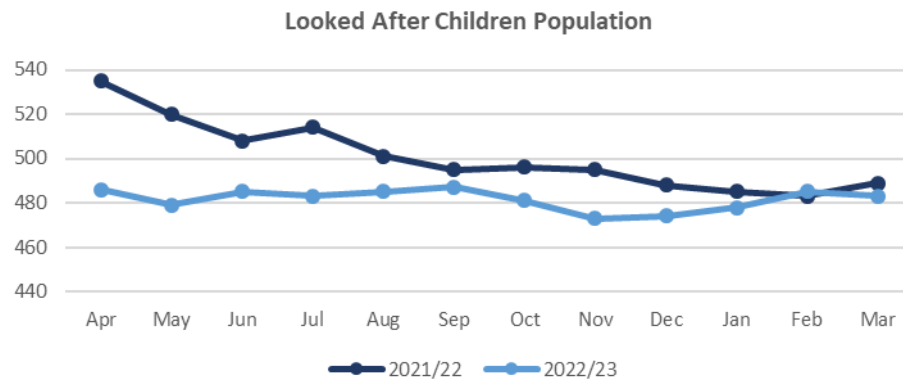


LAC Population - April 2021 to March 2023

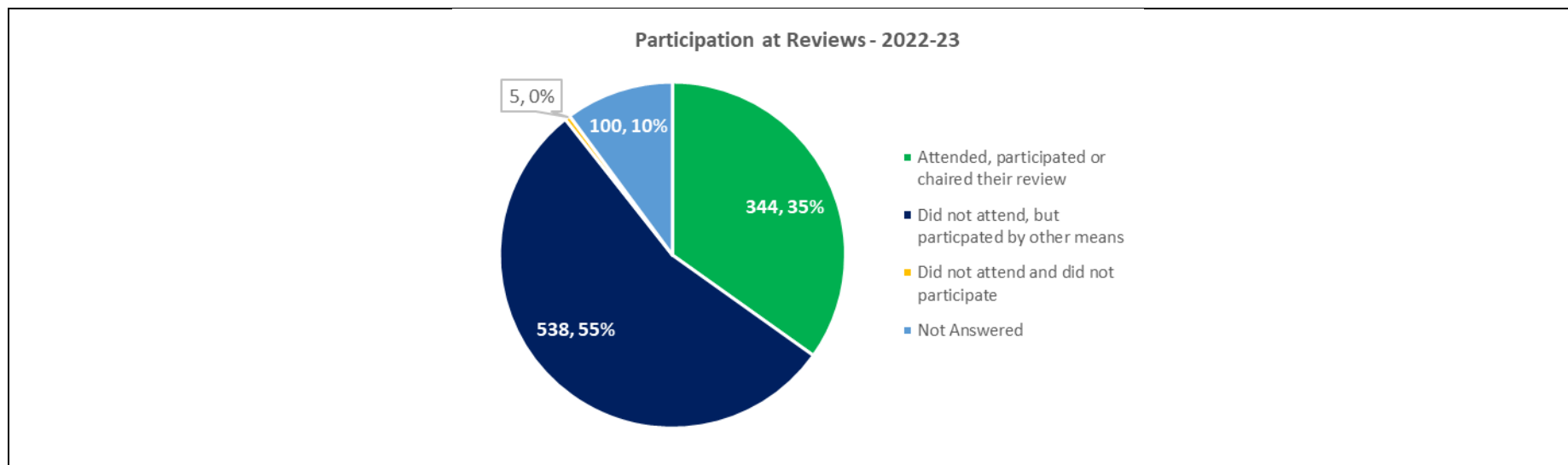


Annual Performance and Measures

Measure	2021/22	2022/23
The number of children looked after at the end of the year:	488	483
The total number of children who became looked after during the year:	112	128
The total number of children who ceased to be looked after during the year:	175	134
The total number of LAC reviews for looked after children held during the year:	1162	1143
The total number of Pathway Plan reviews for looked after children held during the year:	263	252
The total number of adoption reviews for looked after children held during the year:	56	37



IRO Monitoring - Participation	2022/23
The total number of reviews carried out during the year, for children aged 5 and over:	987
The percentage of children, aged 5 and over, who attended, participated or chair their Review during the year:	344, 34.85%
The percentage of children, aged 5 and over, who did not attend their Review but participated by other means:	538, 54.51%



Children's Participation

Children and young people's voice within our involvement with them is hugely important, particularly in their meetings. Our IROs work hard to get young people and children to participate in their meetings. The IRO standards have placed greater emphasis on the importance of children and young people attending and participating in their meetings. IROs are placing emphasis on visiting their children and young people prior to their meeting to talk about the agenda, who they want there, where they would like to hold their meeting and we are finding that children and young people are more willing to come as their voice is being heard and listened to. We know this from our participation feedback and appreciative enquiries. Young people and children have told us that having their choice of biscuits and refreshments which are a big contributory factor. We have even 'been creative in making ice-cream sundaes as part of their meeting' (quote from HL 2023).

Care Experienced young people feedback about their lives and what matters to them.

“could the young people be involved in this plan and be told that this should be happening”

“I have never been asked if I want snacks in my meeting, this is important”

“I have never seen my care and support plan, I have not contributed to it”

You have greatly impacted my life in a way that not many people could do so I really am grateful for that, after all you are my biggest fan! (A ‘I have been at every meeting. I know I can ring my IRO myself if I need a problem solving.

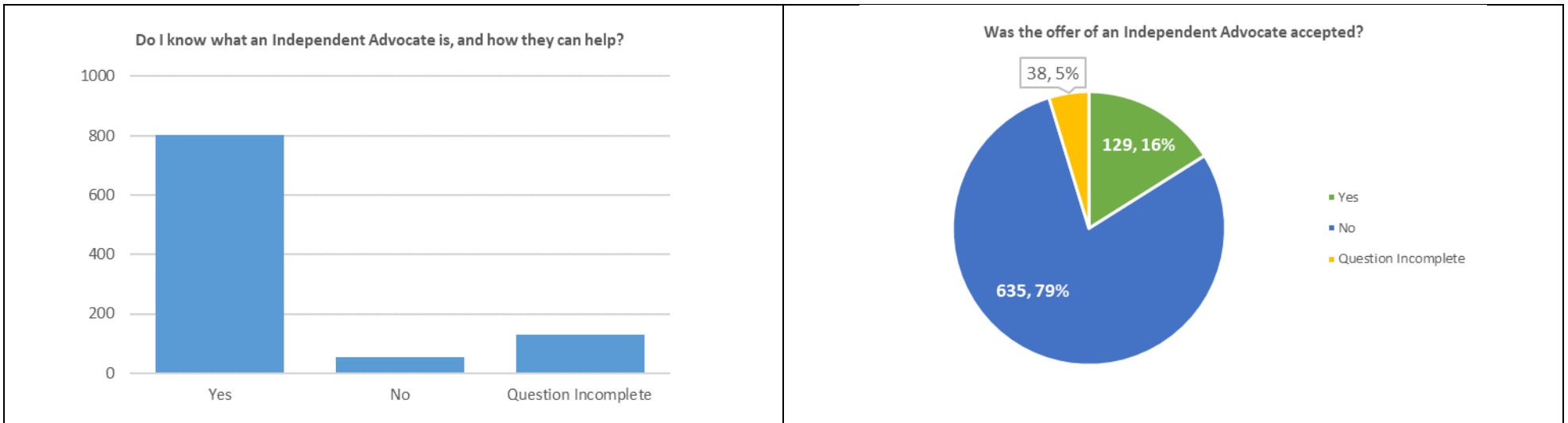
“My reviews are scheduled for when I am in school/college and I miss out on activities I want to do here, Can we schedule them for times that suit me”

“I use my mobile phone every day, why can't I have my information given to me this way instead or in a leaflet .”

“ I would like a place for all of my information to be in one place, like my HWB account in school, We could include when it is, who is attending and have all the plans in place”.

IRO Monitoring – Advocacy of care experienced children.

The total number of reviews carried out during the year, for children aged 5 and over:	987
The percentage of children, aged 5 and over who are looked after, who knew what an Independent Advocate is and how they can help: We use a video explanation to explain to younger children if needed that is produced by National Youth Advocacy Service.	802, 81.26%
Of the children who knew what an Independent Advocate is, the percentage who accepted the offer of an Independent Advocate:	129, 16.08%



There is a low number of children and young people taking up advocacy and work is currently underway to explore why this is. Swansea is working closely with National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to identify if this is a process issue or if it is because having another person who they do not know in their life is what matters to them. We are sending weekly updates of our referrals to support the social worker and NYAS to link in at the earliest opportunity. The best hopes from this inter-agency working are that we will be able to understand better the uptake and/or decline of the service.

Dispute Resolution Process

The dispute resolution process is set out within Part 6 of the Care and Support Plan. It has been developed to support the IRO in raising failings in a child and young person's care and support plan. It is an escalation process that aims to address drift and delay and monitors the performance by the Local authority of its functions in relation to the child's case.

There have been six disputes raised with operational managers for children we are corporate parents for. From the commencement of the six protocols raised, the Service Quality Unit have facilitated discussions to resolve issues identified with the child's social worker, and team manager. From the All-Wales IRO group, we know that the protocols raised are low in line with the population in most Local Authorities and refresher training might be helpful, however we also recognise that discussions take place daily to prevent escalations formally taking place. In addition, we are working on developing with WCCIS a module to capture discussions prior to issuing a dispute resolution to evidence the partnership working between the social work teams and IROs, this has been logged with WCCIS and we are awaiting a programme design.

Health Assessments of Looked After Children

At every meeting the IRO will confirm if a health plan has been completed by the care experienced children nurse or allocated health visitor. This is a statutory requirement for one to be completed every 12 months. This information will be recorded and included in the overall care plan on WCCIS and reviewed in line with the care and support plan. We are working with the Learning and Innovation Team and care experienced children health team to gather a greater understanding of themes, and trends as well as quality, which is essential for improving health outcomes in the short and long term. These are completed every 6 months for children 0-5yrs old and annually for 5-18 yrs. old. It is the IRO's role to identify any existing health actions from the plan and follow up on them with the Swansea Looked After Children Health Team if not received and it is their role to take this forward.

The following data is the current health plans completed during the 12 months and on time.

	Initial Health Assessment	Review Health Assessment	Out Of County	TOTAL
Apr-22	4	25	11	40
May-22	14	28	11	52
Jun-22	9	10	12	31
Jul-22	7	9	4	20
Aug-22	8	22	2	32
Sep-22	9	17	12	38
Oct-22	8	50	9	67
Nov-22	13	27	7	47
Dec-22	6	212	9	36
Jan-23	9	48	5	62
Feb-23	4	29	4	37
Mar-23	8	25	9	42
				504

[Personal Education Plans Received](#)

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a statutory document for care experienced children and young people. It is an evolving record of what needs to happen to enable them to make accelerated progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP documents the education journey for a care experienced child. It forms the education part of the child's care plan and sets out the identified needs and school history. Below is the number of PEPs currently received by SQU by Education. We are working with Learning Innovation Team and care experienced children's education coordinators to gather a greater understanding of themes, trends and quality which is essential for improving the health outcomes. We have also been part of audits in quality assuring a small sample of PEP's completed to take learning and feedback to individual schools.

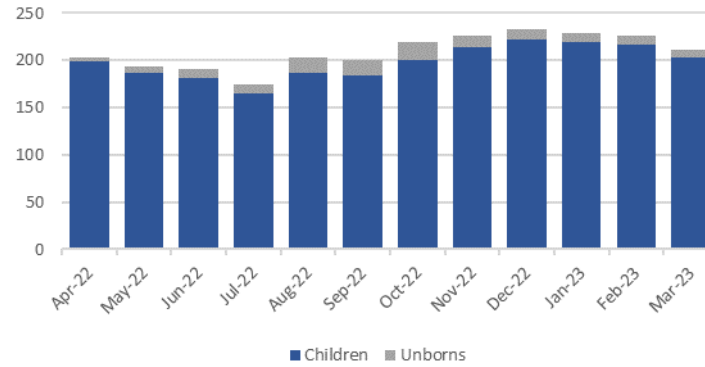
Month	Initials (Returned)	Ongoing Reviews (Returned in timescale) – data not available for PEPs returned out of timescale
April 2022	4	41
May 2022	2	35
June 2022	6	31
July 2022	2	28
August 2022	6	12
September 2022	5	59
October 2022	2	58
November 2022	1	50
December 2022	3	48
January 2023	5	36
February 2023	3	31
March 2023	4	78

Currently we can only report on initial PEPs and ones received within timescales; however this is not to say a PEP might have been completed but not received within the agreed timescales and attached to WCCIS (this data needs to be explored). We had hoped that a new IT system (virtual schools) might have been live to help assist with these figures however this has been delayed. We believe the delays are within the Education Department and we are awaiting confirmation from them on the progress with this new IT system.

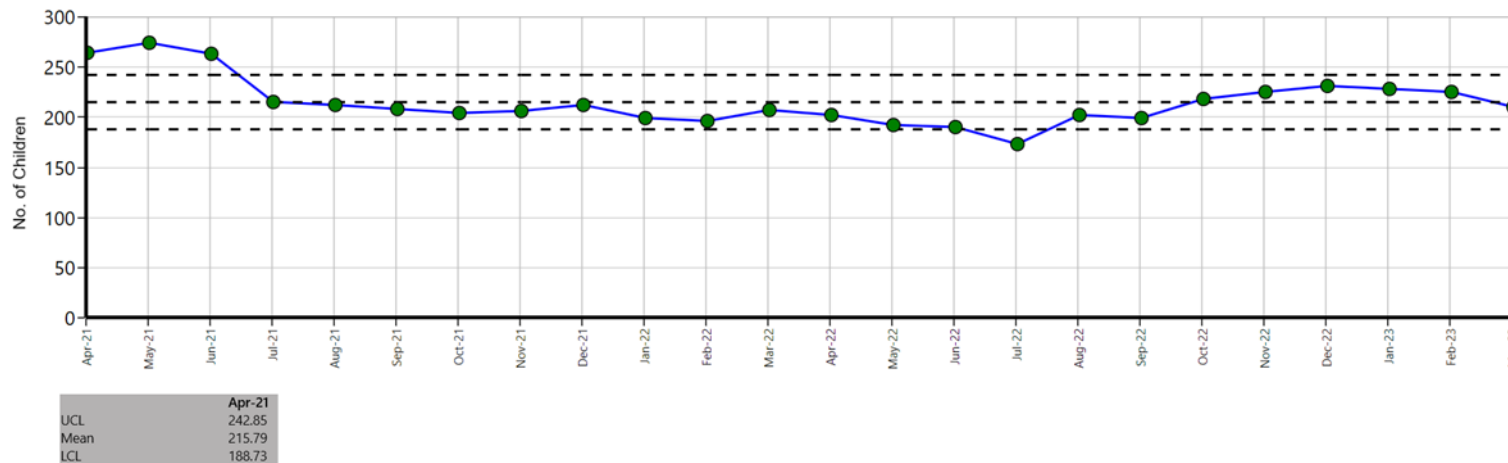
Child Protection Register

Population Trend 2022-23

	Children	Unborn
Apr-22	199	4
May-22	187	6
Jun-22	181	10
Jul-22	165	9
Aug-22	187	16
Sep-22	184	16
Oct-22	200	19
Nov-22	214	12
Dec-22	222	10
Jan-23	219	10
Feb-23	217	9
Mar-23	203	8

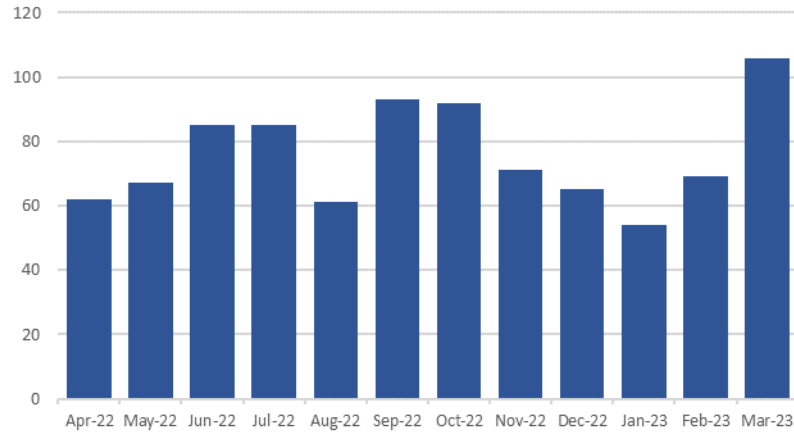


CP Population

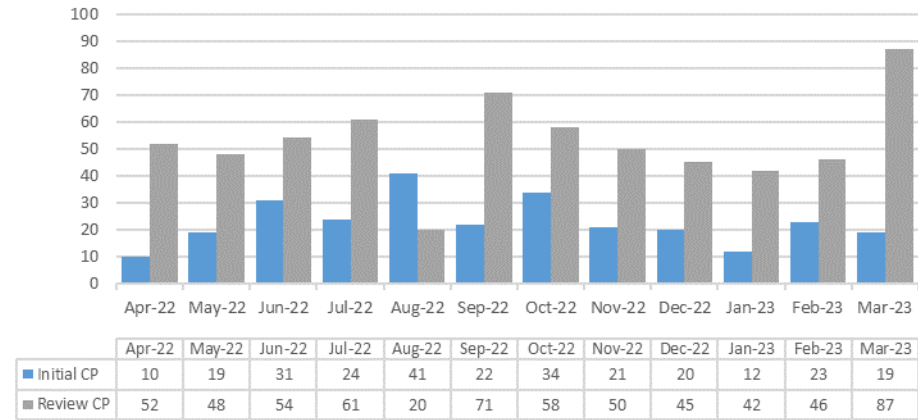


Reviews Held 2022-23

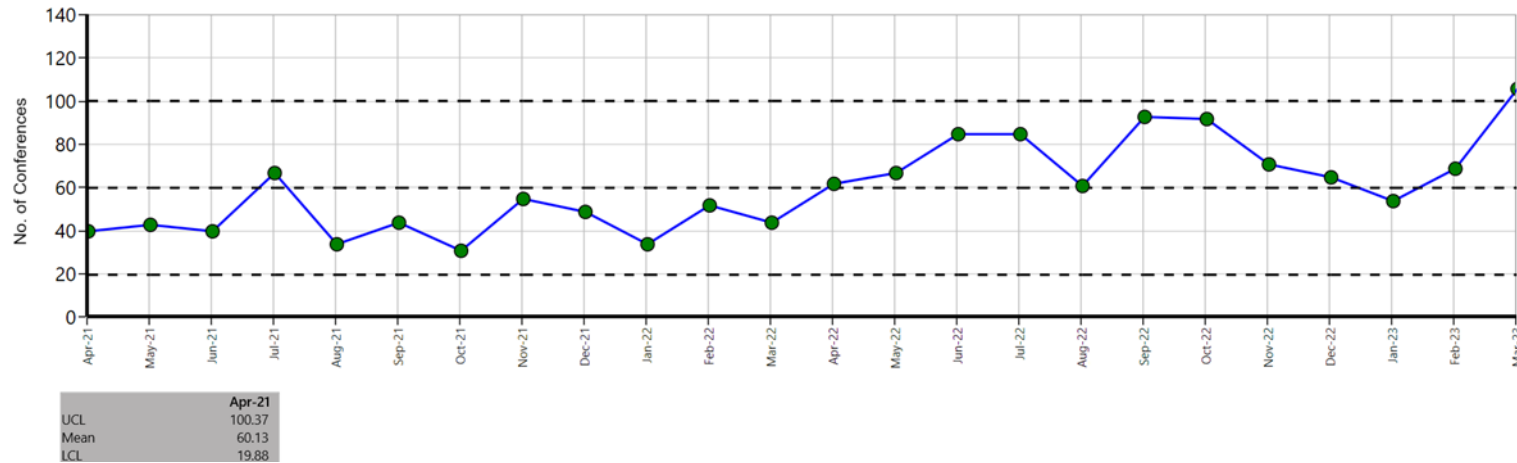
Number of Reviews Held



Type of Review by Month



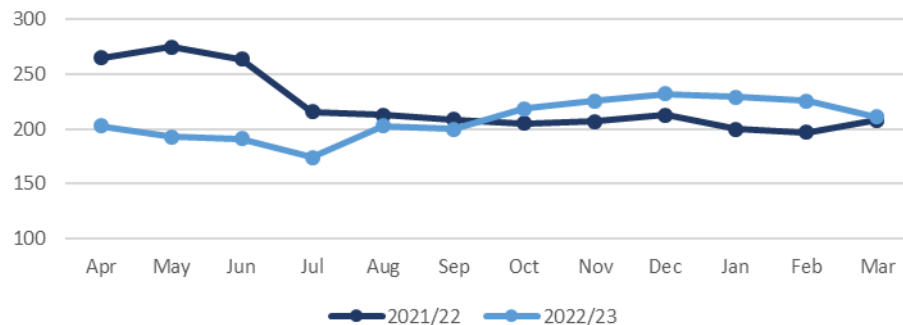
Child Protection Conferences - April to March 2021-23



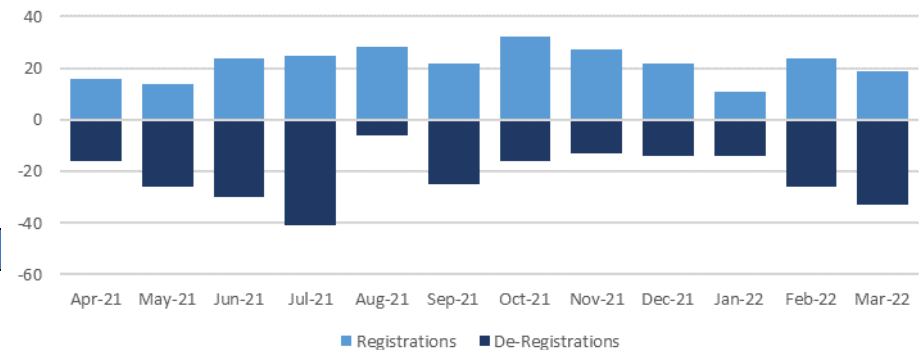
Annual Performance and Measures

Measure	2021/22	2022/23
The number of children on the Child Protection Register at the end of the year:	199	203
The percentage of children on the Child Protection Register at the end of the year, that have been registered previously:	36, 18.09%	66, 32.51%
The total number of registrations to the Child Protection Register during the year:	259	264
The total number of de-registrations from the Child Protection Register during the year:	313	260
The total number of Initial Child Protection Conferences carried out during the year:	158	276
The total number of Review Child Protection Conferences carried out during the year:	375 * this reflects the total number of meetings held	634 * this reflects the total number of children considered at conference. There were 387 meetings held.
NB: The measure for 2020/21 was a manual count of total conferences held (per family), not individual children considered in the absence of reporting due to the system change from Paris. The measure for 2021/22 was a system count of all individual children considered at initial conference as reporting was available		

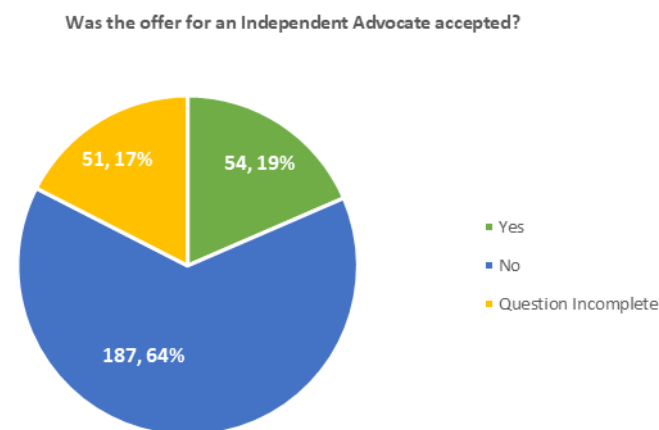
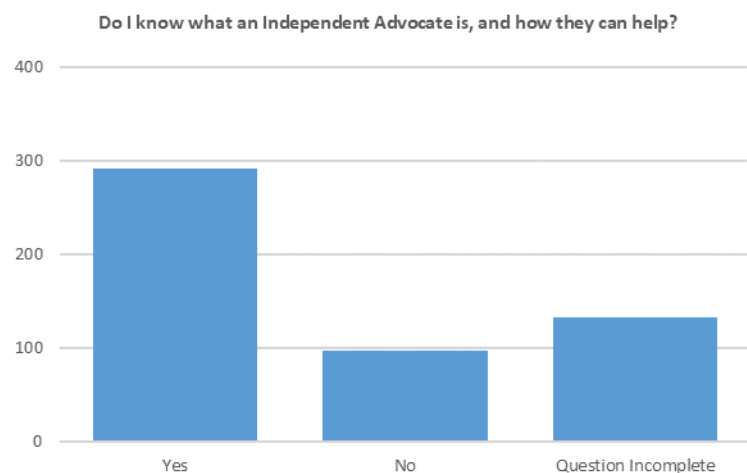
Child Protection Population - includes Unborns



CPR Registrations & De-Registrations



The total number of Child Protection Conferences carried out during the year, for children aged 5 and over:	521
The percentage of children, aged 5 and over, who knew what an Independent Advocate is and how they can help:	292, 56.05%
Of the children who knew what an Independent Advocate is, the percentage who accepted the offer of an Independent Advocate:	54, 18.49%



Children Participation in Child Protection Conferences

Children and young people voice within our child protection process is hugely important to us. Our child protection conference report is written to have the child or young person voice at the start of the process and to help us understand the impact on them and her their views. Children attending conferences in person is something that is improving from last year, however there is still work required to increase this direct participation. We had 16 young people come and participate in their conferences and help develop their safety plans, ages range from 10-17. What we know are some barriers are that families do not want their children exposed to the worries, meetings are in school time and children do not want to attend, it can be scary and intimidating for them so careful planning is required, as sometimes they may only come for some of the meeting, or a CP chair will visit them to gather views independently outside of the meeting. This all takes time and as we are limited to timescales and work capacity, this can be challenging for staff which may not be right for children and young people.

It is however recognised that it is not always appropriate for them to attend all the meeting if it's a CP conference and to attend part and to explore this the chairperson will meet with them separately. The Wales safeguarding Procedures have placed greater emphasis on the importance of children and young people attending and participating in their meetings and this is something in Swansea we want to improve on. It is vital that once we identify a child is attending, we offer the support of advocacy or an interpreter. We are collecting data to help us understand how many children who are "sufficiently old enough to participate in person" could attend and if they don't what is the reason to help us make improvements.

SQU Analysis

As the SQU service in Swansea we have a collective responsibility to ensure that our care experienced children, young people and care leavers can have the outcomes every good parent would want for their children and that we safeguard and promote children and young people who are at risk of significant harm. This means ensuring they are safe and providing opportunities to help them achieve their potential and we all have an important role to play.

It is the IRO's role to monitor the performance of the local authority as their corporate parent and identify any areas for development. As this is a dual role, the child protection conference chair's role is to focus on safeguarding in line with the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures which outlines safeguarding practice to help strengthen our services across Swansea. Over the last 12-month period, the numbers of care experienced children and children on the child protection register have remained stable, however the referrals evidence the complexities of family lives are much greater and the Covid pandemic has a part to play. The implementation of Born into Care Wales has also been a factor in the increase of unborn referrals for conferences and having oversight of the care plan earlier than previous years. In Swansea, we have achieved consistency for children and families in that we have been able to allocate the same IRO/CP chair to every young person within our service. Families tell us in doing this it has prevented them repeating information and strengthening relationships. Within Swansea we use a strengths-based approach to all our meetings and within conference we co-produce safety plan with families and children which are quality assured via the SQU service and Learning and Innovation team.

Within the team we have been fortunate to retain experienced staff, and successfully recruited new members both internally and externally. We recognise that social work teams have struggled with staff retention and sickness, and we can see that this has on times had a direct impact on children and young people due to the number or rescheduled reviews, changes in social worker impacting on relationship building. As a team we have not only managed to maintain our own priorities but also helped with supporting child protection visits and driving forward trajectories for children in residential children's homes. As a service we continue to address drift and delay through the dispute resolution process, only escalating issues if they have been unable to be resolved through discussion.

Cockett House has been refurbished and is a more child and family friendly building where staff in Child and Family are able to stop ad hoc for hot desking or facilitate meetings if required. The building has allowed us to facilitate our own participation program, which is ongoing with the hope that this will be led by the young people themselves. This builds on capturing the voices of our children and young people within their meetings in a venue of their choice. In developing participation, it has allowed us to encourage young people to be part of interviewing new staff members.

We continue to work with our partner agencies on shared outcomes to ensure we are meeting the needs of children and families who access our service. We accept there is more work to be achieved with health, Police, and education on outcomes as corporate parents around the development of accessing PEPs/health plans in a timely manner and attendance at conference. There is also further work to be achieved around professionals completing reports for conference, what is recorded within the reports, sharing the reports with families prior to conference and within the timescales set out in the procedures. We work closely with advocacy services to maximize the offer. It is important for us to understand why there is a low uptake and work to improve this. We have remained committed to an ongoing service review by developing measures to effectively create change to achieving better outcomes as a corporate parent.

However, this year we have struggled to meet some timescales due to staffing and some processes not being followed. WCCIS has been problematic and challenging for staff in recording and producing data and the system does not alert us to when work is not completed resulting in missing data. Regular data collection has been undertaken with our care experienced children and children on the child protection register to monitor how well we as a whole service is doing, and themes and trends are shared with senior management group. We have seen a workload increase with the challenges around lack of placements, staffing issues, breakdown of Special Guardianship arrangements, barriers to carers pursuing Special Guardianship Orders (carers tell us this is due to poor financial packages, limited support around family time, and the need for ongoing social work support) increased re-referral rate in child protection, drift and delay with revocation of care orders and delays within the court arena.

We know from the Supporting Children Permanence Group (SCPG) that cases within the court arena are being delayed due to lack of court and judges' capacity and some social work teams are struggling to complete revocation paperwork due to workload capacity. These challenges can hinder the development and progression of a child/young person's care plan; research by The Fostering Network (2016) tells us "A child's psychological and emotional wellbeing is compromised every time they have an unplanned move, and placement instability often contributes to a range of poor outcomes, including poor educational outcomes, breakdown of relationships with trusted adults and increase in vulnerability".

As a Local Authority we know that our care and support plans need to be developed to become more child friendly and dynamic. Young people and children have told us through the participation events that they do not know what their care and support plan is and have not been involved

in the creation of this. We do however know that as a Local Authority we have a high number of care plans being completed and the aim for 2023-24 is to be part of a working group to develop this with children and young people included.

We know from the care and support pathway plans that post 16 transition and outcomes can be problematic and limited due to the housing crisis and lack of suitable move on accommodation. IRO's focus on young people outcomes by quality assuring the detailed trajectories completed by the social workers as well as listening to the young person to make sure they can be the best they can be to reach their potential and prepared for adult life.

We are beginning to capture/record achievements for our children and young people who are in our care and celebrate their successes and continue to record data on how as a Local Authority we support financial permanence for them when they become an adult.

In going forward for the next 12 months we want to drive and strengthen our learning across the service to achieve better outcomes for our children, young people, and families. We recognise as a service that the information we capture will help us to drive and create quality services and in doing this we will aim to strengthen our work with our partner agencies, colleagues, and stakeholders to ensure we are achieving our service vision and principles alongside the corporate parenting pledge.

1 -For all our children and young people we want them to get the same life chances as others in Wales (No barriers to opportunity)

The IRO// CP chair will aim to-

- continue reviewing and overseeing the whole care and support plan and challenge any drift and delay so that children and young people understand their journey.
- think creatively in achieving outcomes for our care experienced children and young people.
- use learning from our information collected to help develop services and keep children safe whilst celebrating their successes.
- continue to review services and work with the transformation team to develop this.
- continue to challenge the IT system to develop ways to capture and report on data and develop a WCCIS module for protocols which includes informal discussions.
- continue to place children at the heart of everything we do and share resources with agencies and stakeholders to support achieving better outcome for children/Young people i.e., joint training, positive challenges, extending the dispute resolution protocol to our partner agencies.
- continue to work with Advocacy services and identify barriers to children and young people not accepting support.

2 – For all our children and young people we want them to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be (Good education/good job)

The IRO / CP Chair will aim to-

- work in collaboration with education on reviewing all PEPs and take learning from this.
- work with social workers, health, education, and partner agencies to share their conference reports in timescales.
- continue to encourage and support care experienced young people to complete the Stepladder Plus to help gain more financial security.
- challenge if education is not meeting the needs of a care and support plan.

3 - For all our children and young people we want to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to our service and that they influence our service development. (Healthy relationships)

The IRO/ CP chair will aim to-

- continue to involve children through participation groups or individual sessions to help develop information leaflets on their care experiences, child protection process and the IRO/CP profile information.
- continue to develop good relationships with children and young people.
- look to develop a software/apps/website in line with the Participation Officer to meet the needs of young people so they can access information through a variety of channels.
- continue to review, challenge, and develop the IRO/CP role by listening to our children and young people.
- work with children/young people to develop information about their meetings and how we deliver this information to them.
- work with health partners to develop a way to capture the data on health plans and paediatric assessments being completed and recorded and be supported to attend health appointments from the right services.
- work with Police to attend conferences in person and the best hopes are that they attend some reviews.
- continue to take learning from the child protection questionnaire and the response from the rapid review.
- work with social workers to help us encourage the participation of children and young people at conferences.

4 – For all our children and young people we want them to have Permanence (Safe place to live)

The IRO / CP chair will aim to-

- work to support our colleagues in the social work teams in supporting our care experienced population and children on the child protection register, through creative thinking and joint working.
- continue to report on themes and trends to senior management so that our young people and children have the same life chances as each other and reach their potential.
- continue to review the trajectories of care experienced children in residential placements and supported accommodation and maintain a close oversight every 3 months.