

CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	17/11/2022
REPORT OF	Janice Spencer, Director of Children's Services
SUBJECT	Children's Services Improvement
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Improving services for children is a core strategic aim within the Council Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An overview report of the performance measures which evidence the impact of the delivery of the children's services continuous improvement plan.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

To ensure that scrutiny panel members have an understanding of the performance in children's services, particularly relating to the priorities within the continuous improvement plan. To allow members to scrutinise the performance, which is also interrogated by the Continuous Improvement Board (chaired by the DfE Commissioner) and the Children's Services Oversight Group (Chaired by the Leader of the Council).

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1. North East Lincolnshire Council children's social care (CSC) services were judged to be Inadequate by Ofsted in October 2022.
- 1.2. Since that time, delivery of a continuous improvement plan has been underway. The plan sets out the priorities and underpinning actions required to improve CSC services so we are ensured that our children are safe, cared for and achieve positive outcomes.
- 1.3. In order to measure the impact of the activities taking place as part of the improvement plan, a series of qualitative and quantitative performance metrics have been chosen. These measures provide an indication of whether the delivery of the plan is resulting in improvements in the quality of services for children.
- 1.4. The attached reports appraise the internally validated performance as at the end of September, and contextualise with some very recent data (early November)

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 If children's social care services do not improve at pace, the children we are supporting will remain unsafe, and this could result in the death or serious injury of a child open to our services. Furthermore, there are significant financial and reputational risks to NELC.

3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 An ongoing programme of internal and external communication is in place, with a dedicated communications officer aligned to CSC.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 There are significant financial implications if services do not improve. The cost of external agency foster homes and residential provision for our children in care is excessive. Agency social workers place huge cost pressures on staffing budgets. Key elements of the plan are to reduce the number of children in our care, and to increase the number of permanent social workers.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Every element of the work within the improvement plan and across all children's services has implications for children. Improving services for our most vulnerable children is vital.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No impact

7. MONITORING COMMENTS

7.1 In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

8. WARD IMPLICATIONS

8.1 All wards are implicated, however, the wards of East Marsh, West Marsh and South have the highest concentration of our most vulnerable children.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

10. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Claire White, Head of Practice, Performance and Quality

JANICE SPENCER
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

 <p>NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL</p> <p>www.nelincs.gov.uk</p>		Date	3rd November 2022
		Version No.	1
		Author	Claire White, Head of PPQ

Performance Report Narrative for DCS Update

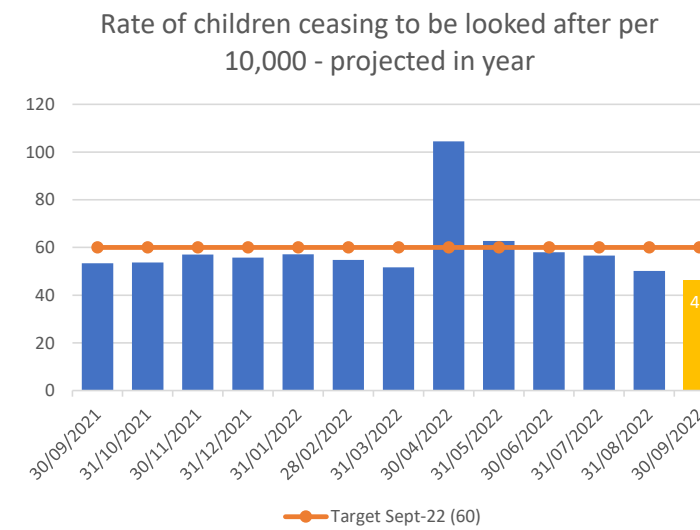
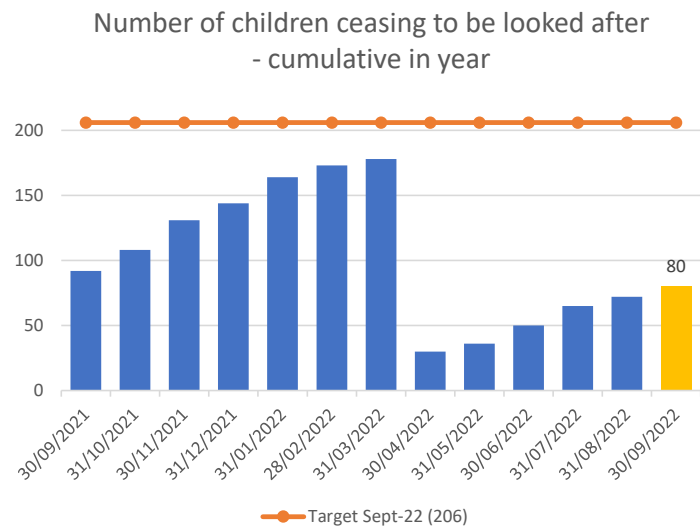
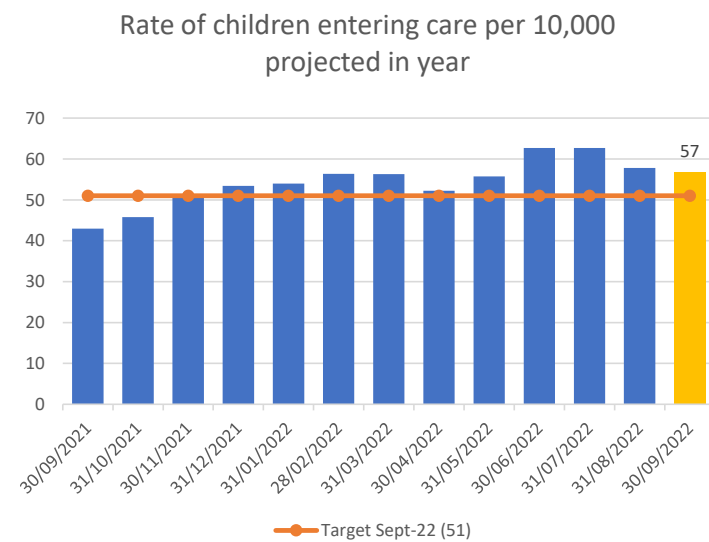
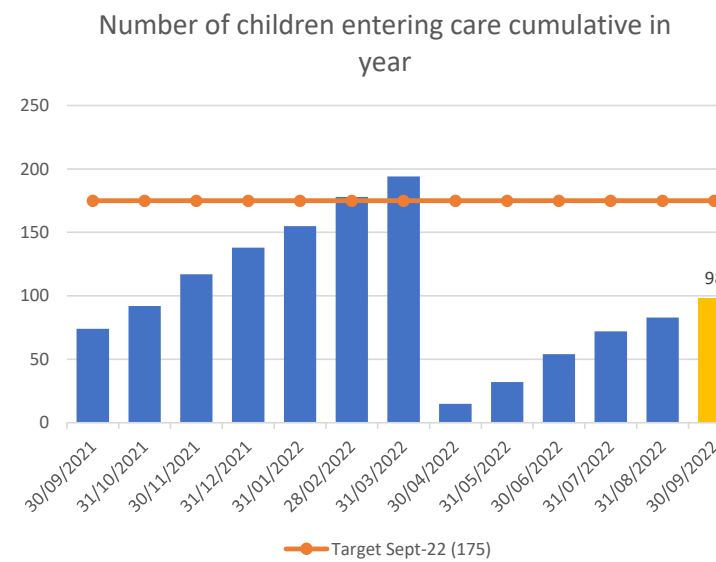
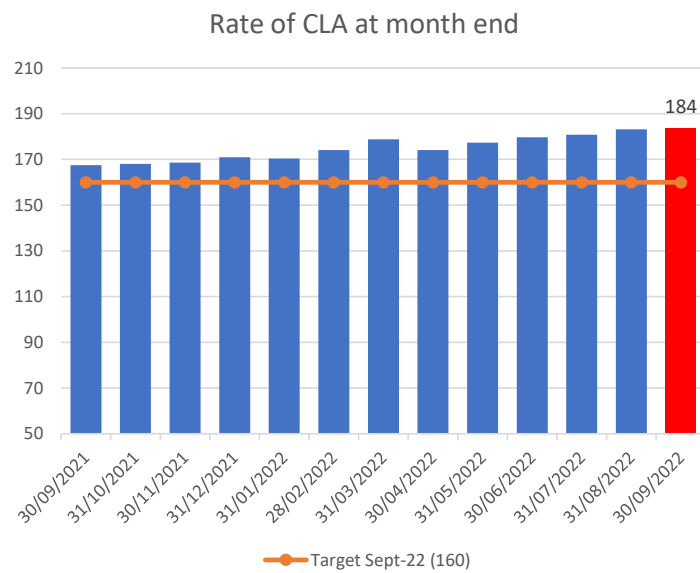
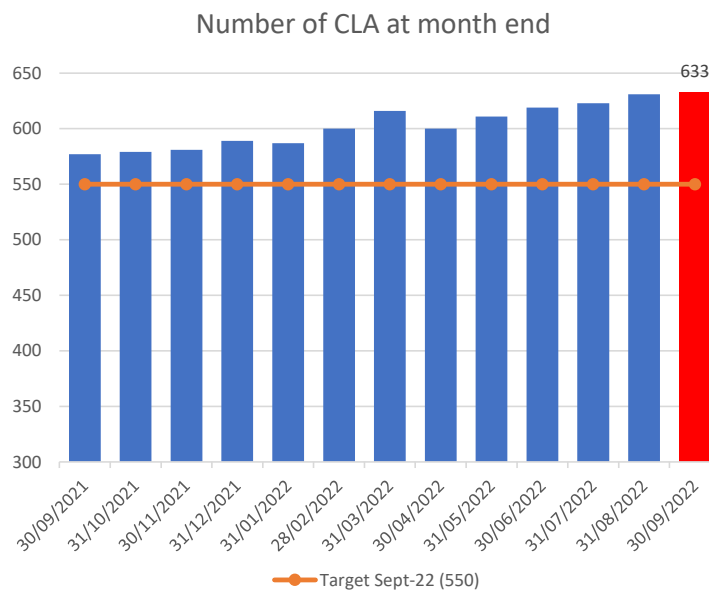
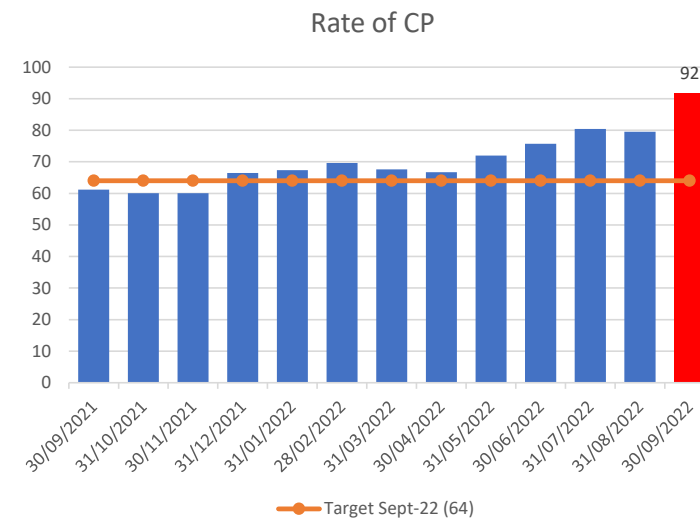
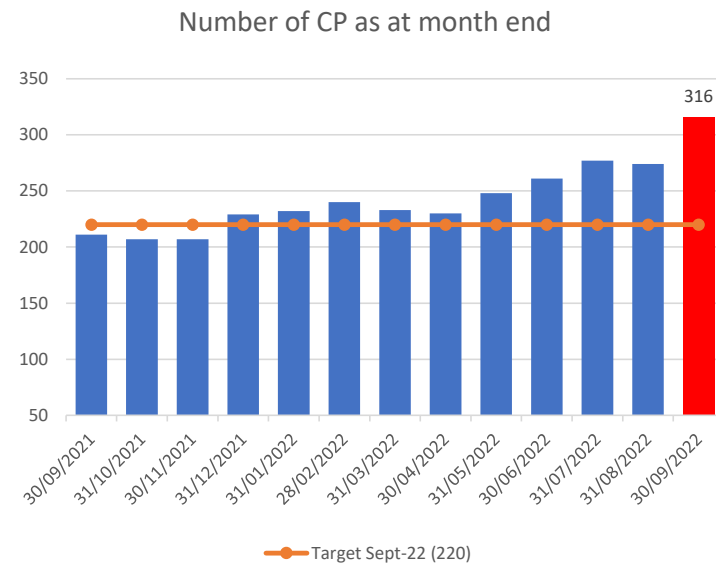
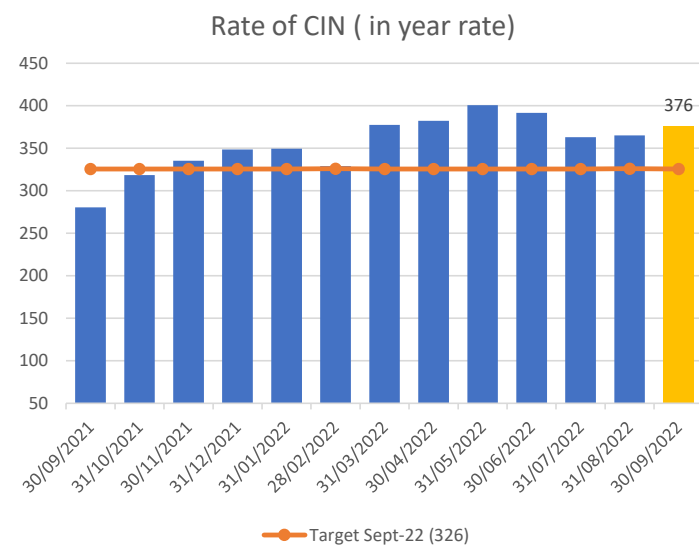
- Social worker average caseload had increased at the end of September – this was due to the departure of some agency project teams with very short notice. A new agency project team was sourced, and commenced case holding by mid-October. Current average caseloads (2nd November 2022) are 21 for Social Workers and 15 for ASYEs
- 28% of the workforce were permanent as at 30th September 2022. We have now commenced allocating to our new ASYE cohort and our overseas workers. We anticipate that by the end of January 2023 we will tip the balance: 69% (66 fte) permanent SW to 31% (29) agency.
- The total number of open cases increased from 2393 on 31st August to 2466 30th September (an increase of 51 cases – 2% increase). This has now reduced at the end of October to 2352 (a reduction of 94 – 3.8%). This is as a result of a review of cases, identifying a number of cases which could safely close to CSC.
- As a result of the agency workforce difficulties in September, the rise in the number of children was also experienced in CP (281 Aug to 316 Sep) and CLA (625 Aug to 633 Sep). 10 CLA have now moved to permanence and as at 3rd November the number of CLA is 623.
- However, the number of children subject to a child protection plan continues to rise. Since the start of this financial year numbers have risen from 230 to currently 342 as at 3rd November 2022. This represents an increase of 49% in 6 months. This is as a result of work being undertaken to review all children subject to CIN for over 9 months, which saw a number step down from CSC, but also a number step up to CP. Subsequently the agency workforce issues within the CP service have compounded the situation, which has in effect created a bottleneck in the CP service. Work is now underway to reduce the number of teams and streamline the workflow so that children will experience fewer changes of social worker and there will be fewer transitions between teams.
- Positively, in the Effectiveness of Service Delivery and Compliance performance measures, we can see that there have been improvements across a number of performance measures. Whilst re-referrals were 30% in September, this has subsequently reduced to 23% for October which has reduced the rolling in-year rate to 28%.

- Assessment timeliness has been around the 80% for the last 3 months which is being reflected in the rolling in year rate seeing month on month improvements, currently up to 63%
- Visits, reviews and supervision timeliness measures are all performing either on target, or close to the incremental targets set for September
- Importantly, the feedback our children have given us in respect has improved across all 6 key measures, and all have either reached the incremental target set for September, or within 10% of achieving the target.
- The % of children reporting they see their SW regularly has increased by 20 percentage points this quarter – now 69% up from 49%. This is still much lower than our target of 80% but is a positive movement and the highest % over the last 12 months. In addition, 75% of children report that they can get in touch with their SW when they need to
- 69% of children have reported that their SW has made a positive difference – up from 60% last quarter and 94% of children report that they currently feel safe.
- 98% of children report that they are happy where they live which is a really important indicator given the difficulties experienced in finding homes for our children – although this sample is from 67 children which is 14% of children aged over 4 in our care
- 71% of children report they are happy at school which is up from 66% last quarter.

RAG KEY	Description
Red	Performance is more than 20% from achieving incremental target (forecast by incremental target date)
Amber	Performance is within 10% of achieving incremental target (forecast by incremental target date)
Green	Performance is +/- 2% of incremental target (forecast by incremental target date)

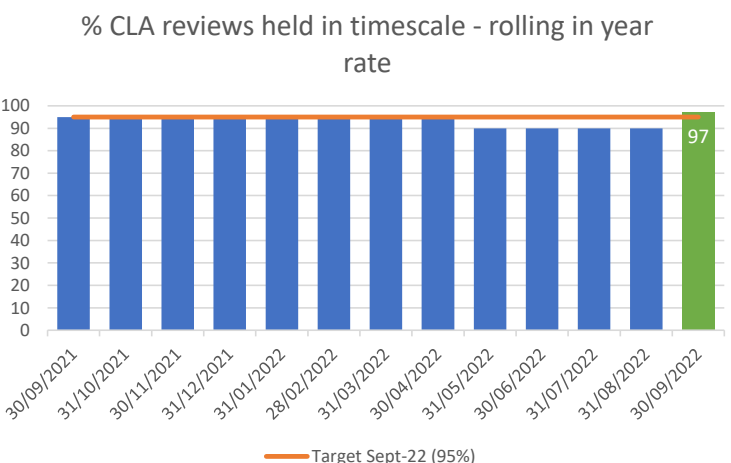
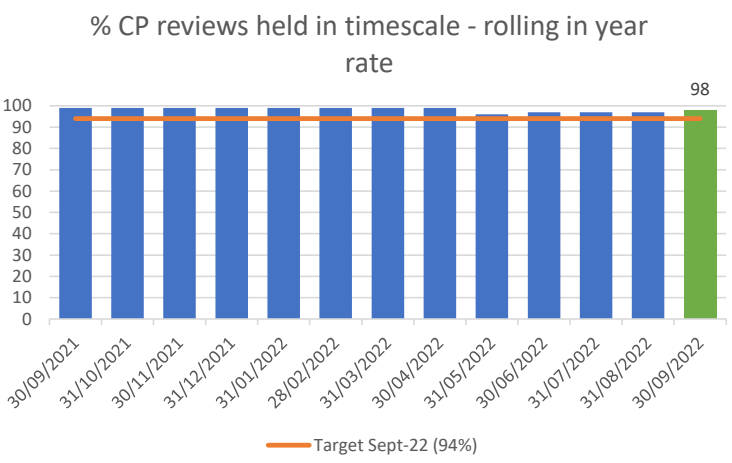
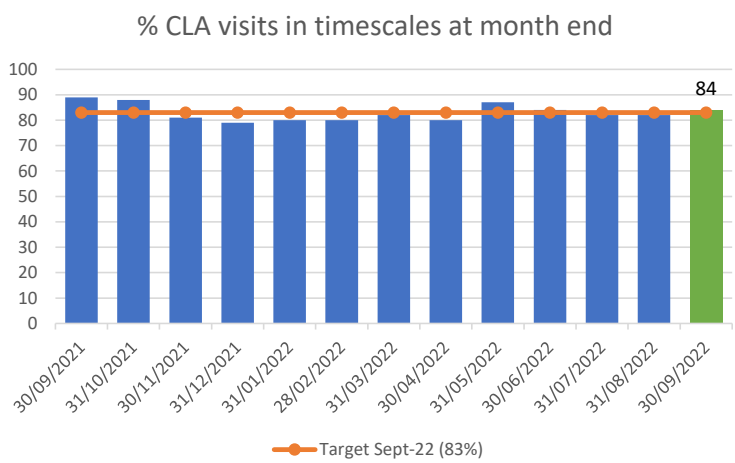
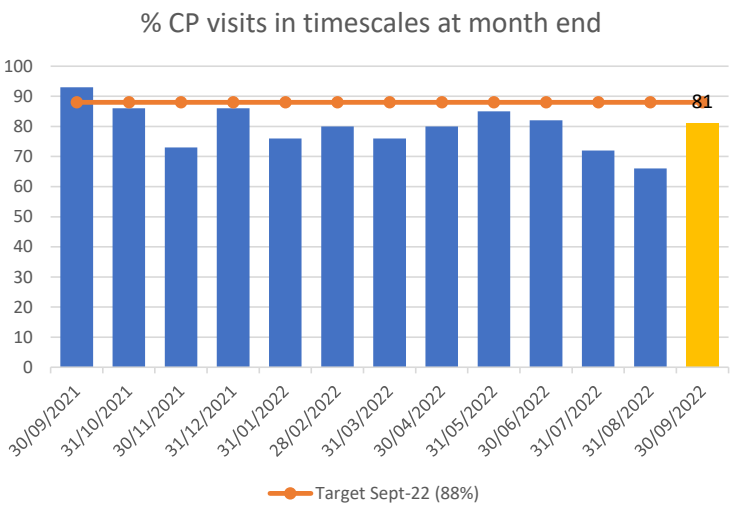
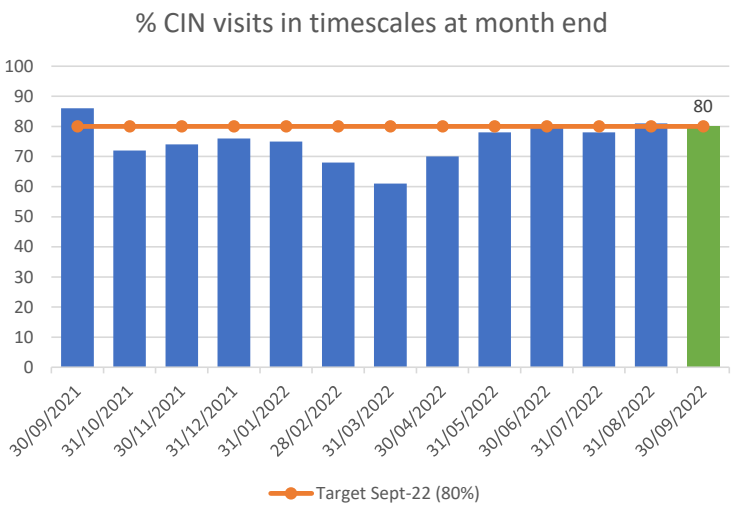
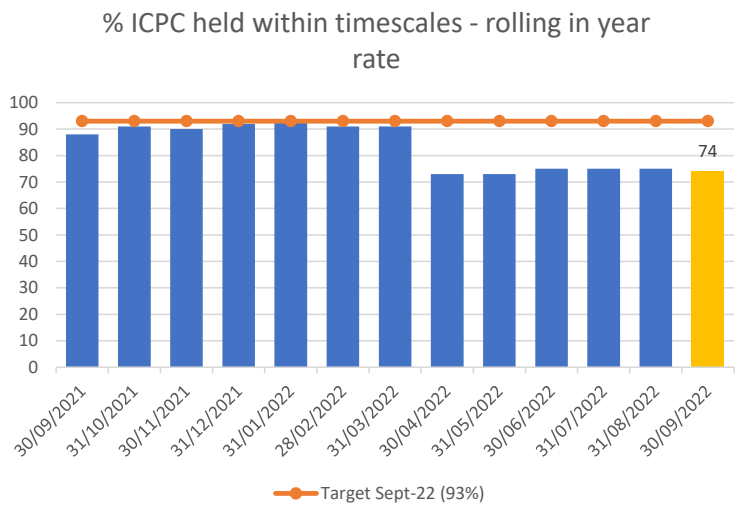
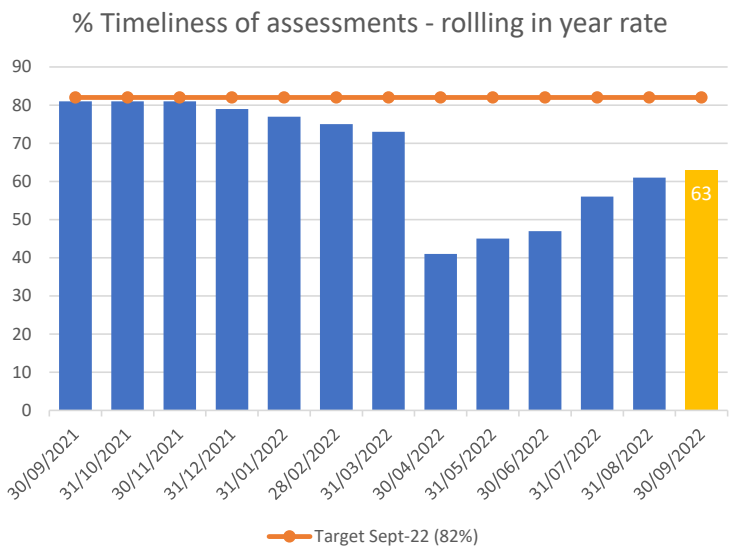
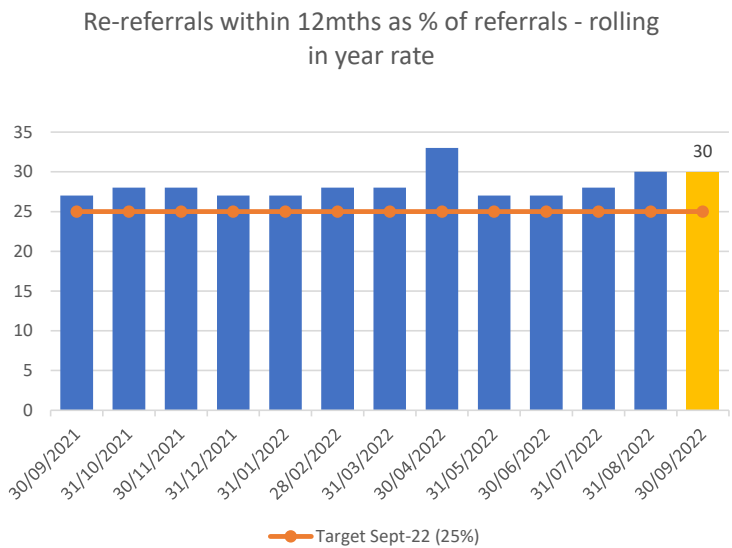
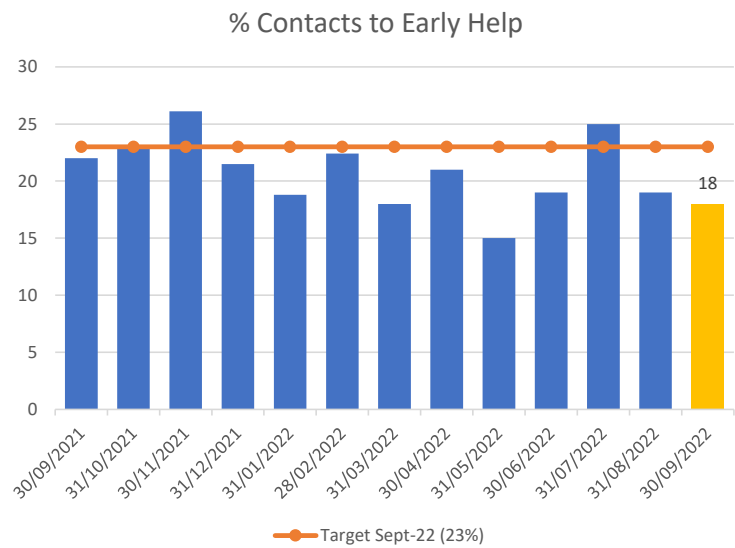
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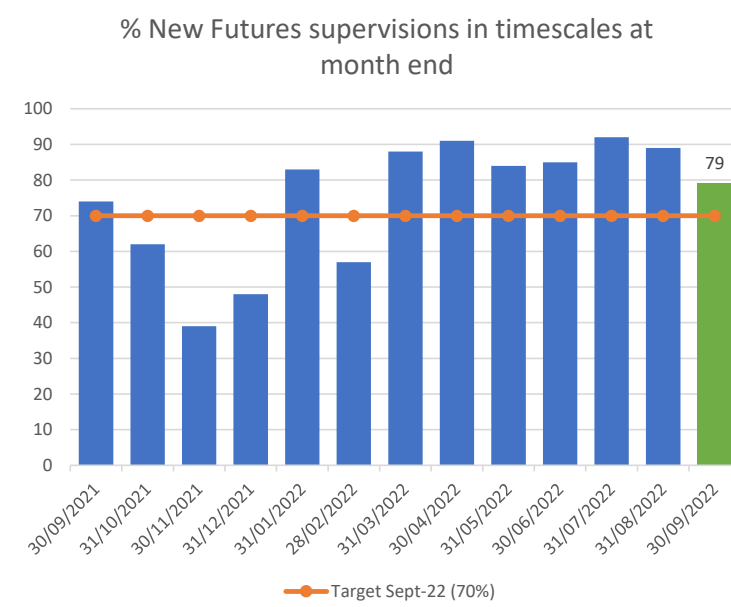
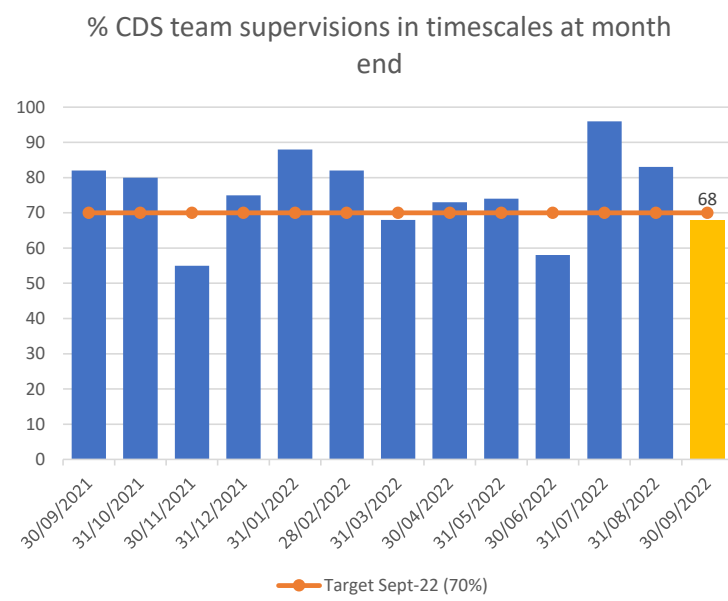
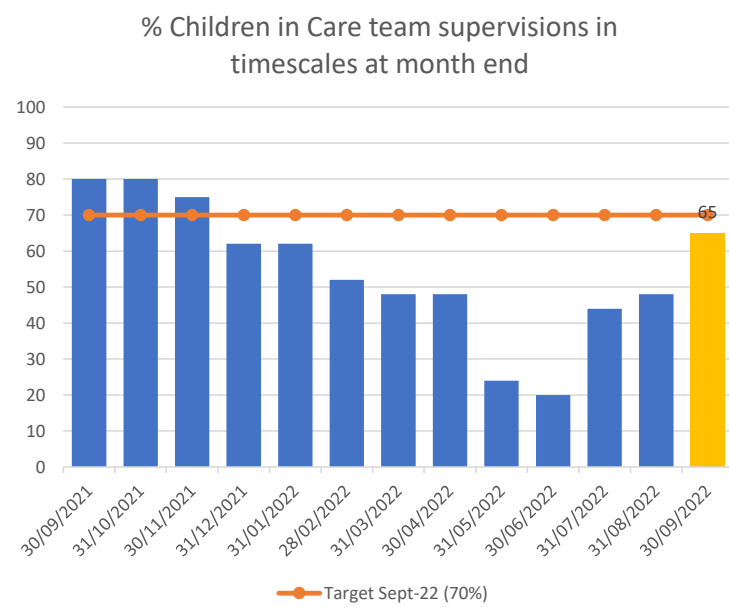
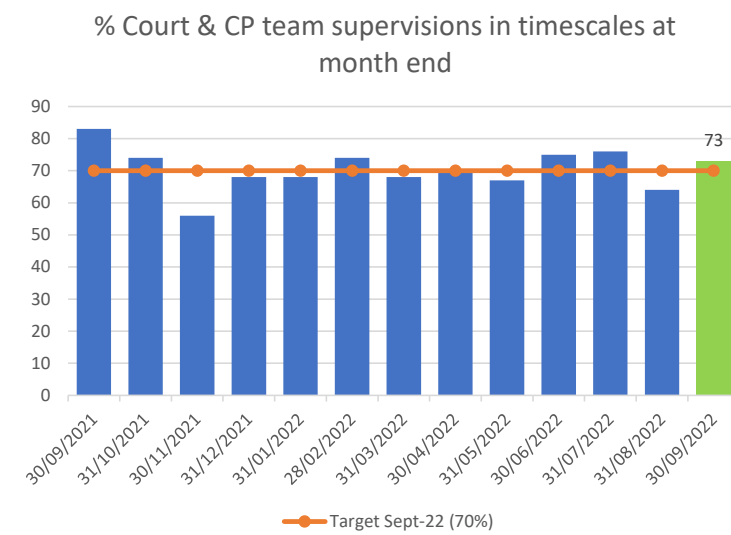
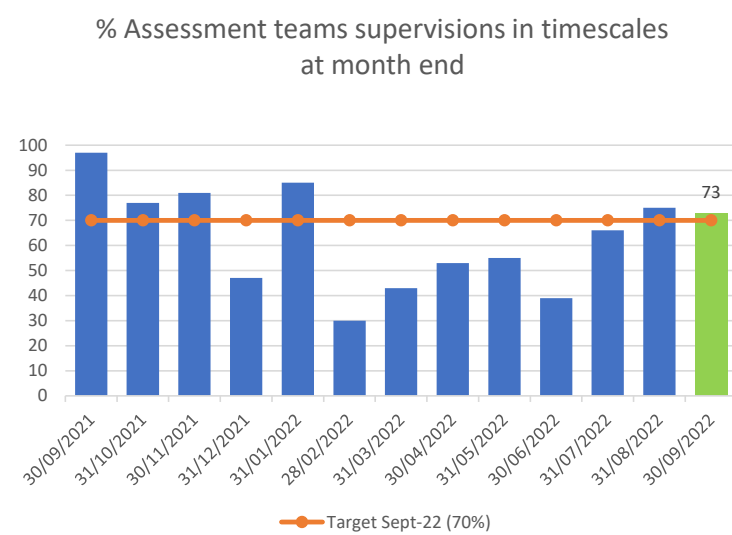
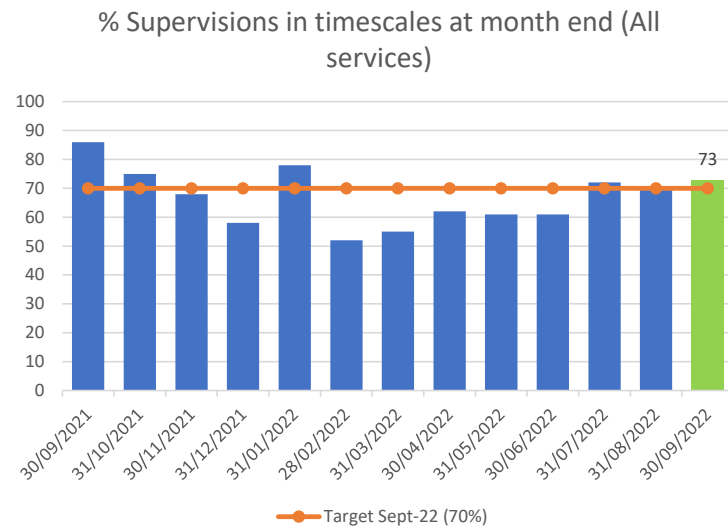




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Effectiveness of Service Delivery and Compliance





Voice of our Children - results are from CLA review questions asked of children looked after aged 5-15 yrs

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	Oct - Dec 21	Jan - Mar 22	Apr - Jun 22	Jul - Sep 22
Completed	32	43	64	49
Incompletes	11	11	13	18
Total responses	43	54	77	67

