

# **Local Support Team Report Card for Schools**

January –July 2016

Schools and Local Support Partnership Working Group

15 September 2016

## CONTEXT

This report represents the culmination of much discussion and interrogation of data. The questions that it has been designed to answer are:

- **What is the nature of the work that Families First Local Support Teams do with school-age children in Staffordshire?**
- **Does it make a difference?**

In Local Support Teams we have a system that requires managers to have oversight of all work, to sign it off and to be held accountable for key decisions. They review the quality of assessments and interventions, and sign off the closure of LST involvement only when it is clear that there is no more work for the LST. Whilst this system is designed to ensure that internally we can manage for quality and performance, we are nevertheless clear that this means very little to external stakeholders. The challenge is therefore to demonstrate the impact in a way which is more directly reflective of outcomes for children.

In the first half of this year we have been putting in place a more systematic means of securing stakeholder views and of using these as a yardstick for LST performance. The numbers of responses are still low, but increasing steadily. In addition, LST District Leads are making arrangements for the joint audit with head teachers of LST case work to see to what extent our joint expectations can be moderated and a consensus reached on 'what Good looks like'. All of this work has taken longer to come to fruition than we would have wanted.

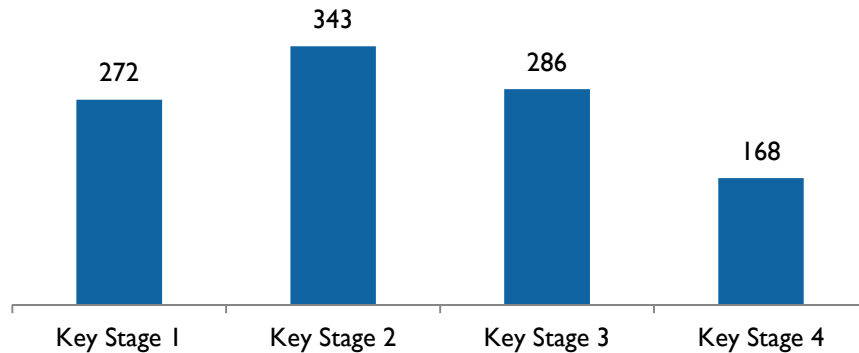
At this stage we can report with confidence on the issues for those school-age children and their families with whom Local Support Teams are involved, the levels of demand, and on the way in which we manage our capacity. We can also report on stakeholder views of the impact as gathered thus far, and on the extent to which Local Support is preventing children from requiring statutory intervention. With regard to the latter, we are challenging our recording systems to provide additional data.

Good data often raises as many questions as it answers: this data set is no exception. The answers though are as likely to lie in engagement and discussion between schools and Families First about how we can work differently together, as they will in further graphs and tables. Improved communication and shared expectations are key outcomes that should emerge from this work.

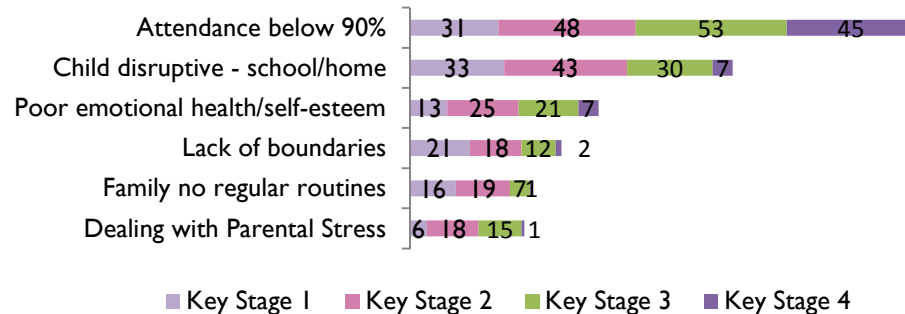
# Quantity

LST practitioners routinely record the origin of the requests for support for families. On average, schools currently account for between 35-40% of the referrals to LSTs, and are the highest source of requests for support.

**Requests for Support from Schools**



**Requests for Support from Schools - Top 6 Focuses for LST Engagement with School-age Children**



Source: Capita

## What this data tells us

1069 (39%) of all requests for support were received from schools in this period. The majority of children in families requesting support are in Key Stages 1 & 2.

Local Support Team practitioners categorise their work in **'Focuses of Engagement'** to enable Families First to track the nature of demand for LST support – the main 'issues' for families. There are 61 'focuses' in total, and most families will have more than one issue to address. An analysis of work with school-age children during this period has identified the six most frequently recorded focuses: and the spread between the Key Stages.

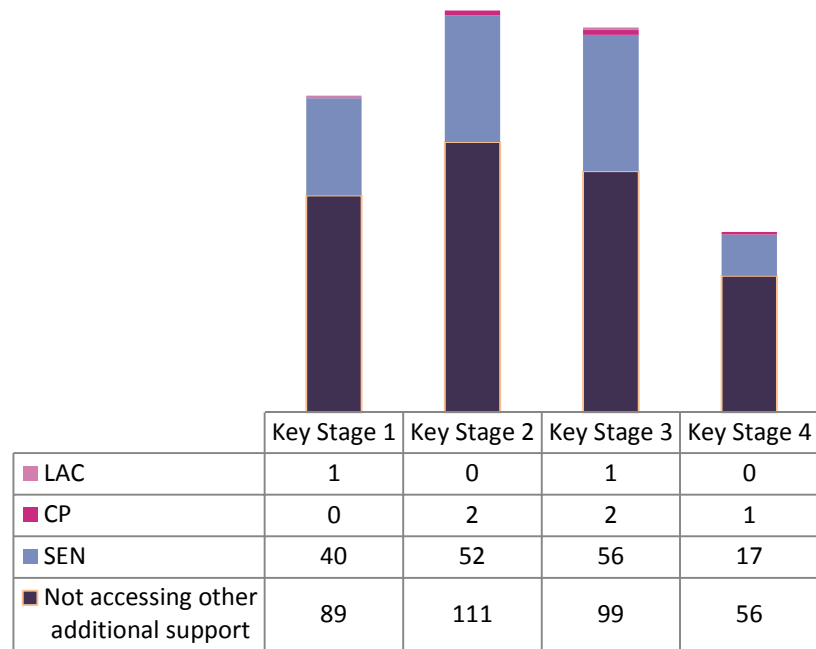
Poor school attendance is the most frequent focus of LST engagement with school-age children (34%), followed by disruptive behaviour either at school or at home (22%) - although this was far less of an issue for KS4. At this stage, there is minimal overlap with these two reasons for engagement as both together represent 54% (Note: These figures do not include penalty notices for unauthorised leave of absence during term time.)

Of note is the higher proportion of involvements with primary phase children for poor emotional health/self esteem which, if consistent over the next few months, will be the subject of an internal audit to explore further and inform the commissioners of services for lower level support for emotional well-being.

# Quantity

Head teachers asked for information about the extent to which the children that Local Support Teams were working with, were also receiving additional support from other children’s provision.

**Open LSTs involvement at end of July 2016 with children who are subject to other additional support**



## What this data tells us

The majority of pupils that LSTs are working with are not accessing other additional support.

Local Support Teams work as part of Families First, making their skills, experience and integration with local agencies and community provision available as additional capacity for work with families where there are children on a statutory plan. We know that most children and young people, when asked, want to remain safely at home with their families. If additional support can make this possible, then LSTs are part of that package.

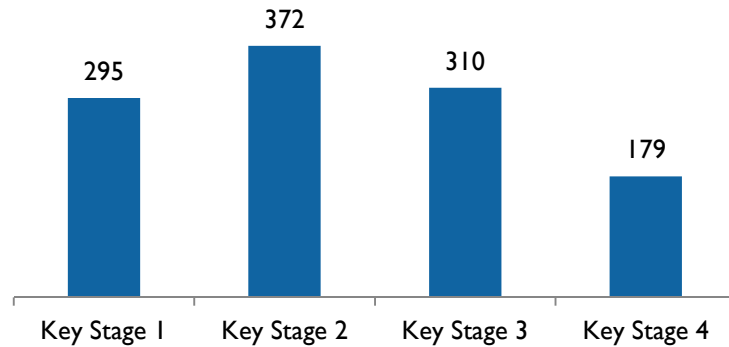
At the end of the reporting period, LSTs are working with two Looked After Children and four children subject of a Child Protection Plan; two from KS2 and two from KS3.

There were 165 children with SEN across all Key Stages at the end of July, mostly in KS1, 2 & 3.

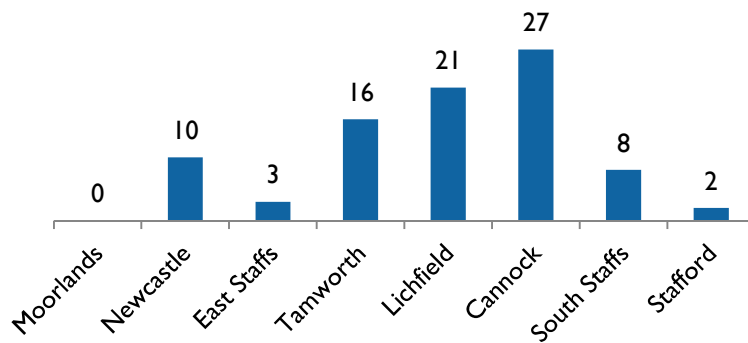
# Quantity

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board monitors the extent to which agencies from outside of the authority are using the Early Help Assessment: this is a proxy measure for how engaged the wider sector is in identifying children and families who need additional support, early enough for that support to make a difference before problems escalate. The LST ‘Offer to Schools’ asks that an Early Help Assessment is started with a family and informs a school’s request for the LST to become involved.

**Number of Early Help Assessments lead by LST and Started By Schools**



**Schools Leading on Early Help involvements, by District**



Source: Capita

## What this data tells us

1156 Early Help Assessments are being led by the LST that have been started by schools during the reporting period 1 January – 31 July 2016; the highest proportions were in the Newcastle Borough and East Staffordshire District. Most Early Help Assessments were started for children in Key Stages 2 & 3.

Where the Early Help Assessment is used by an agency external to the authority and that agency is continuing to lead on the work with the family, then the EHA guidance is clear that the LST should be notified. This is so that reports can be generated for the SSCB on partnership engagement with families to provide early help. Schools are leading on 87 of Early Help involvements following use of the EHA. The LST will play only a minor role in the Team Around The Family for these interventions.

Cannock District schools are leading on the highest number of EHAs, followed by Lichfield and Tamworth. There is an even spread across all key stages.

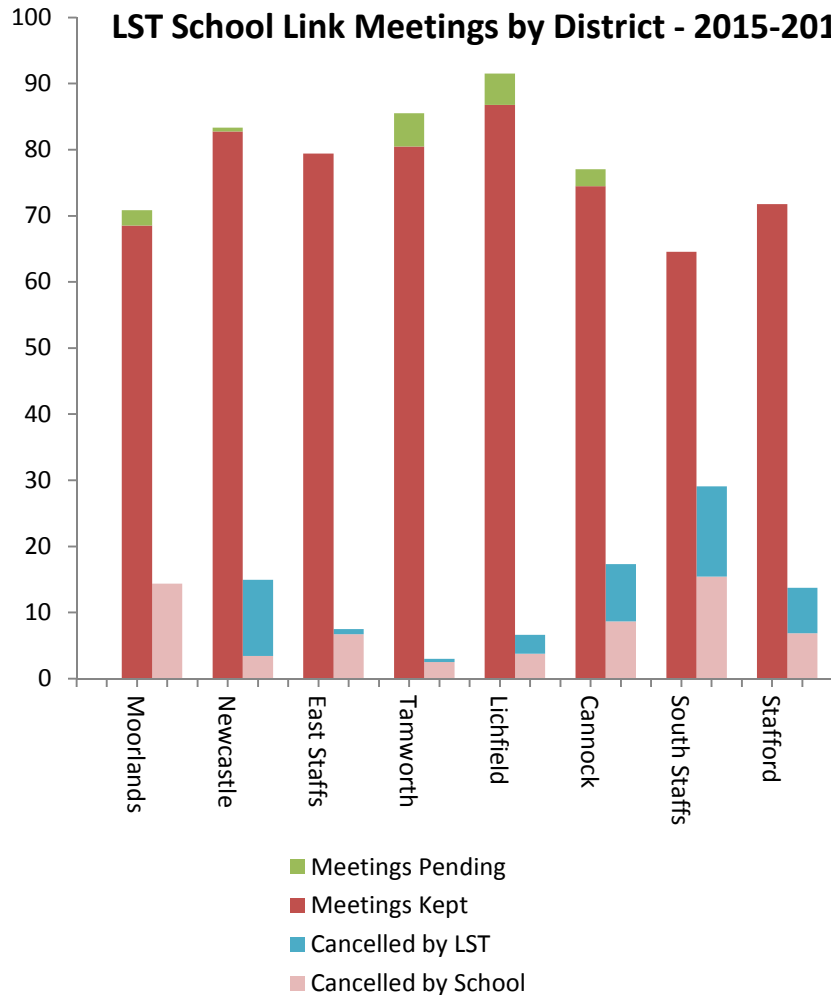
## Actions

Link Meetings need to ensure that they capture all early help activity in a school, and that this is then recorded to ensure that all of the early help that school currently deliver, is reported and recognised.

# Quantity

A local tracker is maintained across each district, providing senior managers with up-to-date information about the extent to which school link meetings are taking place as scheduled. Now that regularity has been secured, there will be a focus on promoting consistent and effective practice, and aligning this with the annual survey results in which schools are able to provide their overall view of their value.

**LST School Link Meetings by District - 2015-2016**



Source: School Link Meetings Spreadsheet

## What this data tells us

This is the first time we have captured this data, and this graph represents the status of districts at the end of the last academic year.

It must be noted that whilst this is a positive end to the year, throughout the year this graph has previously shown a need to improve services in specific districts.

The content and usefulness of these meetings can be judged from the annual survey, which reported that there has been an improvement with the impact of link meetings: over 54% responded that they were either somewhat or extremely satisfied.

## Actions

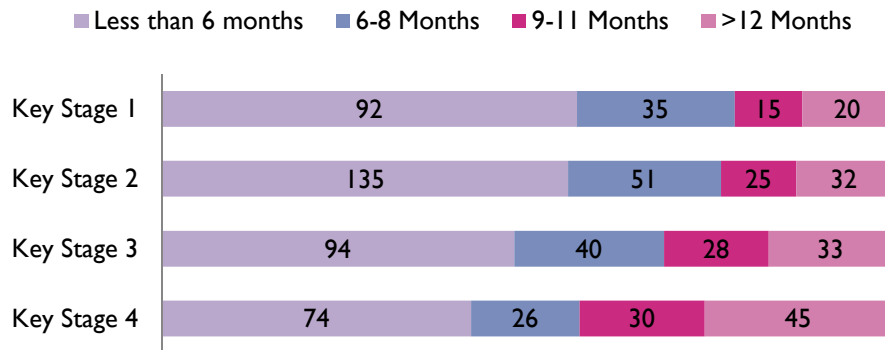
South Staffs, Stafford and Newcastle are all districts that need to focus on reducing the number of meetings cancelled by the LSTs, whilst along with the aforementioned districts, Staffordshire Moorlands LSTs need to work with schools to reduce the number of meetings that the schools have to cancel.

To further improve the quality and consistency of school / LST link meetings LSTs will now be using an approved standard agenda and recording template, ensuring that all LST and school representatives have clear expectations for, and understanding of the outcomes of the meetings.

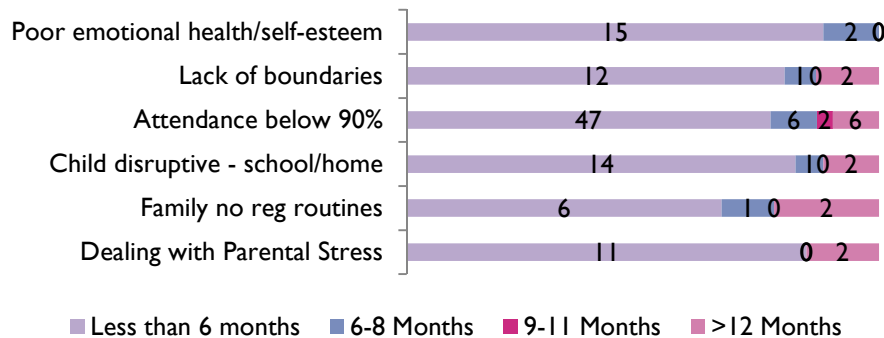
# Quantity

A concern for all case work-based services is that work with clients is conducted with pace and focus, and that ‘drift’ is avoided. Local Support Team practitioners review all of their involvements on a regular basis in order to ensure that there is progress. Involvements are closed when there is evidence that the outcomes identified in the Plan have been achieved; in some cases, where it is very difficult to progress and circumstances fail to improve, then discussions are held with Safeguarding colleagues in Families First and - if appropriate – the family may be ‘stepped up’ for social work intervention. Head teachers were interested in the profile of the length of time that cases are open.

**Length of LST Involvements for School-Age Children**



**Length of involvements for LST cases for the Top 6 Focuses for School-Age Children**



Source: Capita

## What this data tells us

LSTs ceased to work with 775 school-aged children in the period; half of all these involvements had a duration of less than six months.

57% of involvements with KS1 and 2 pupils had a duration of less than six months. One in five involvements with KS4 pupils had a duration of more than 12 months.

For the top focuses of engagement, the majority (80%) were closed by the end of 6 months. Work to support improving attendance is the most likely reason for cases to be open for more than 6 months.

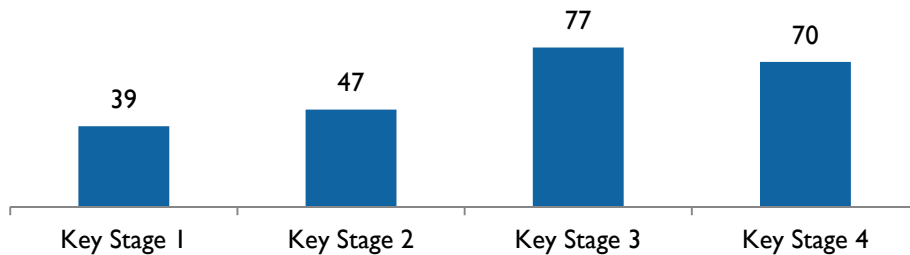
## Actions

Further data has been requested to show what the focuses have been for the work that has lasted for the longest period of time. If there are efficiencies to be made in improved partnership working with schools, then a joint review of those circumstances where LST involvement lasts for a long period of time may provide some opportunities to work differently and to better engage local community organisations in providing families with ongoing, longer lasting support.

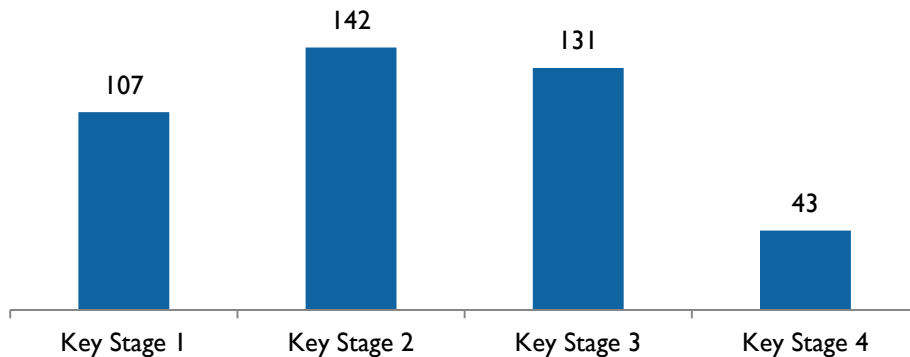
# Quantity

Are Local Support Teams accessible and engaged with the right issues? Local Support Team practitioners maintain a record of a range of issues for the family with whom they work and these are summarised for service management and planning. The following issues have been selected as they form the majority of open cases with school aged children.

**LST Involvement with ATTENDANCE BELOW 90% Focus as at 31 July 2016**



**LST Involvement with BEHAVIOUR Focus as at 31 July 2016**



■ Behaviour - Boundaries, Disruption, Risk of Exclusion, Alternative Provision

Source: Capita

## What this data tells us

This is the first of 3 slides showing the spread of work with school-aged children against four categories of issue for the child and family.:

### Poor School Attendance

**Behaviour** – lack of boundaries, disruptive, in alternative provision or at risk of exclusion from school

**Emotional Health and Well-Being** – poor emotional health, low self esteem, , at risk of self harm, young carer

**Family Life** – no routines, chaotic household, family unable to provide for children’s basic needs

**Physical Health** – engaging in risky behaviour, poor personal hygiene and physical care, at risk of CSE

**Parental Health and Well-being** – Anxiety/ depression, substance misuse, domestic abuse

The data shows the number of LST focus of engagements across all key stages; the highest number of cases open at the end of July are those where behaviour issues have been identified, followed by poor attendance. Behaviour issues have been identified for KS 1, 2 & 3, whilst attendance is mainly an issue in KS 3 & 4.

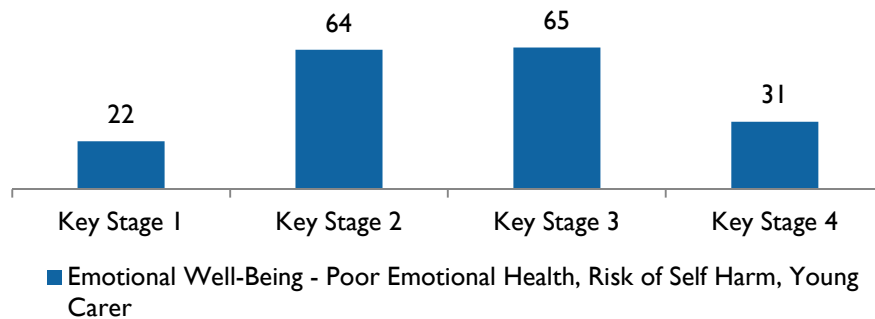
For the 17 pupils at risk of school exclusion, nine pupils have not been excluded since LST work was completed. However, four young people received permanent exclusions during their involvement and three children received a fixed term exclusion after their involvement with the LST



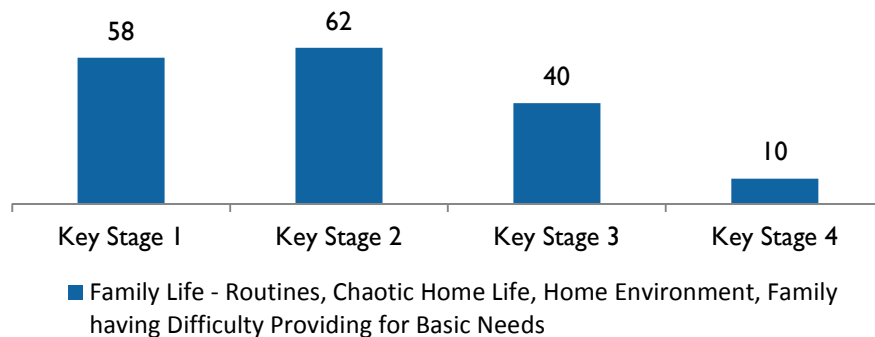
## Quantity

Are Local Support Teams accessible and engaged with the right issues? Local Support Team practitioners maintain a record of a range of issues for the family with whom they work and these are summarised for service management and planning. The following issues have been selected as they form the majority of open cases with school aged children.

### LST Involvement with EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING Focus as at 31 July 2016



### LST Involvement with FAMILY LIFE Focus as at 31 July 2016



Source: Capita

#### What this data tells us

The majority of those children where emotional health and wellbeing issues have been identified are in key stages 2 & 3 with 129 involvements showing this as a focus of LST work. Regular monitoring of this information will show the extent to which this represents a consistent picture in which case, targeted case auditing will be undertaken to better understand the background for those children in Key Stage 1 where this has been highlighted as an issue as this is more common than would normally be anticipated. With regard to the data for Key Stage 4,

In contrast, Family Life has been identified via assessment as an issues mostly in key stages 1 & 2.

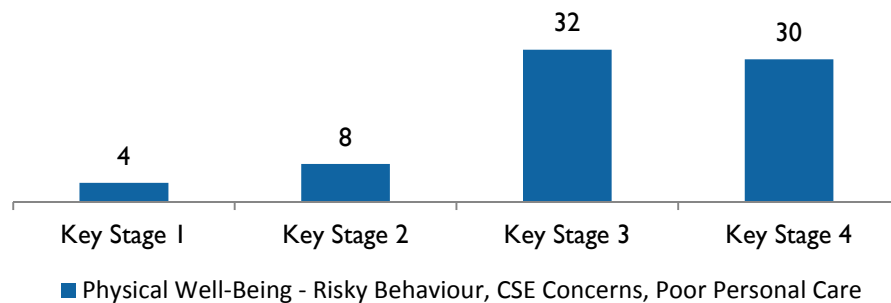
#### Actions

Further analysis is planned of this data in conjunction with the outcomes of the annual school survey and, in particular, the views expressed by secondary schools of the impact of work undertaken by the LST with families where life is chaotic. The hypothesis to test will be the extent to which LST practitioners engage with the whole family in addressing issues which impact on their children. This data suggests that – for older children – there is less recognition of the impact of the home environment on the young person.

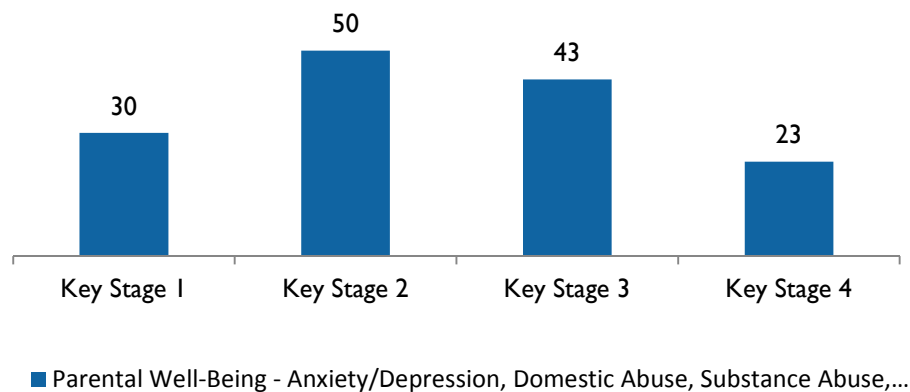
## Quantity

Are Local Support Teams accessible and engaged with the right issues? Local Support Team practitioners maintain a record of a range of issues for the family with whom they work and these are summarised for service management and planning. The following issues have been selected as they form the majority of open cases with school aged children.

### LST Involvements with PHYSICAL WELL-BEING Focus as at 31 July 2016



### LST Involvements with PARENTAL WELL-BEING Focus as at 31 July 2016



Source: Capita

#### What this data tells us

Physical well-being has been assessed as being an concern in the older age group of children in key stages 3 & 4. It is likely that this is as a result of the inclusion of 'Risky Behaviour' in this category (about one third for Key Stage 3), and that the indicator may require review. However, practitioners report few requests for support from primary schools where children are considered to have poor personal care as the schools themselves usually manage this and work with the family.

Parental well-being, including anxiety/depression, domestic abuse and substance misuse has been mostly identified in key stages 2 & 3. These issues are well recognised as important underlying causes of childhood neglect, but are often dependant upon either disclosure by the child, or by the development over time of a relationship with the family.

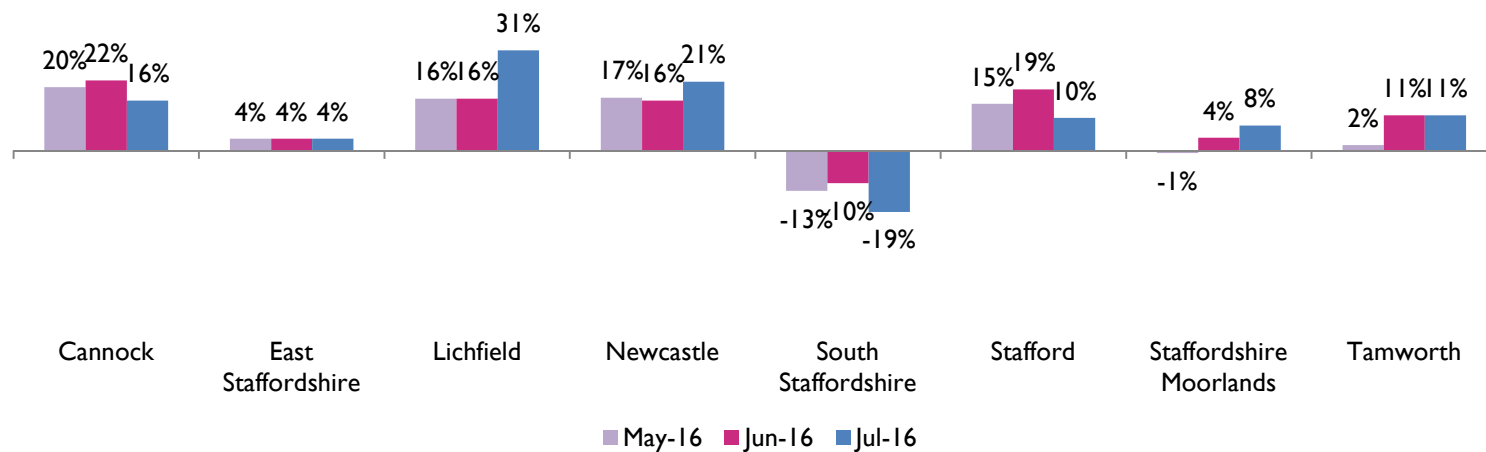
#### Actions

The combination of factors for demonstrating work led by concerns about 'Physical Wellbeing' will be reviewed and potentially separated for Primary and Secondary phases, to ensure that this information can be disaggregated as a data source.

# Quality

One of the key issues identified in the survey to schools in 2015 was a concern about the capacity of Local Support Teams to be as effective as they need to be. One of the key issues is the size of teams and their capacity to manage local demand, particularly when reduced by maternity leave and long term sickness absence – neither of which we have the budget to fully cover.

**LST Staffing Levels (FTE) - Variance Against 75% Target**



### What this data tells us

In July 2016, South Staffordshire had a staffing level of 63%, due to vacant posts and long-term sickness.

Staffing levels improved in Lichfield and Newcastle due to staff returning to work following long-term sickness.

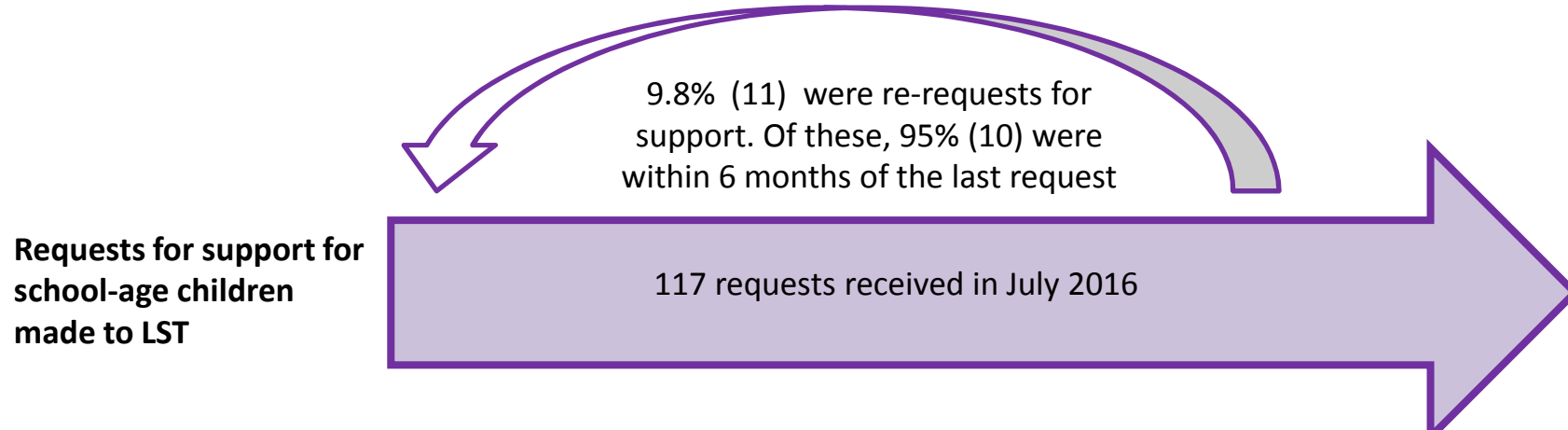
The staffing levels in Cannock and Stafford decreased due to long-term sickness.

### Actions

An audit of establishment has identified unfilled posts which have been allocated to South Staffs, East Staffs and Staffordshire Moorlands to assist with the current capacity issues. Staff on long term sickness absence are being actively managed and this month will see one return to work and another leave the service. Experienced Co-ordinators are working across districts where needed to ensure that management oversight is retained even when capacity is compromised.

# Impact

## Re-referrals to LSTs.



### What this data tells us

A re-request for support may happen for many reasons. It could be that the family situation has changed and there is a new reason for support. It could be that a family requires a short term involvement to improve their confidence in continuing to deliver their plan; or it could be a family who had been stepped up to children's social care being stepped back down. A certain level of re-requests should be anticipated and having no re-requests should not occur. There is no national benchmarking data available for Early Help, but within social care, 'good' performance is in the range of 15 to 20%.

In November 2015 significant changes were made to the Capita One case recording system. As a consequence, July 2016 is the first month for which can demonstrate re-request figures for cases that had previously been open for LST involvement. Of the 117 requests for support received in July 2016, 9.8% were for families where the LST had had previous involvement. 95% of these requests have come back within 6 months of the closure of the last involvement.

A regional benchmarking dataset for Early Help is being developed which will allow us to compare regionally the rate of re-requests and to gauge our comparative performance against statistical neighbour authorities.

### Next Steps

It is important to note that whilst this figure is lower than the social care baseline, this may in part be due to delay in the closure of cases once Local Support Team involvement has concluded, eg if a case is no longer being worked, but a new request comes in, then the existing case will continue to be worked and this is not a re-request / re-referral. However, Slide 7 illustrates pattern of length of time for LST interventions, and demonstrates the extent to which LST involvements are closed within 6 months.

Regular management reporting through the service dashboard for Targeted Services includes re-request rates so this will be monitored. This facilitates monitoring at district level, and a focus on managing performance. Now that the transition to the revised case management system is complete, this data will be reported on a quarterly basis.

# Impact

## Referrals for statutory social work assessment , where there had been previous involvement with a Local Support Team.

**Referrals accepted for assessment to social care**

Between April and July 2016, 2158 referrals were made of school age children and accepted for assessment by statutory social work.

Of these, 21.3% had been known to Local Support from January 2016 onwards.

Source: Children’s Social Care / LST Capita One

### What this data tells us

When a referral is made to First Response, the needs of the family are assessed and triaged. If the family meets the threshold for a social work involvement, it is accepted as a referral and passed to the area safeguarding teams for a social work assessment.

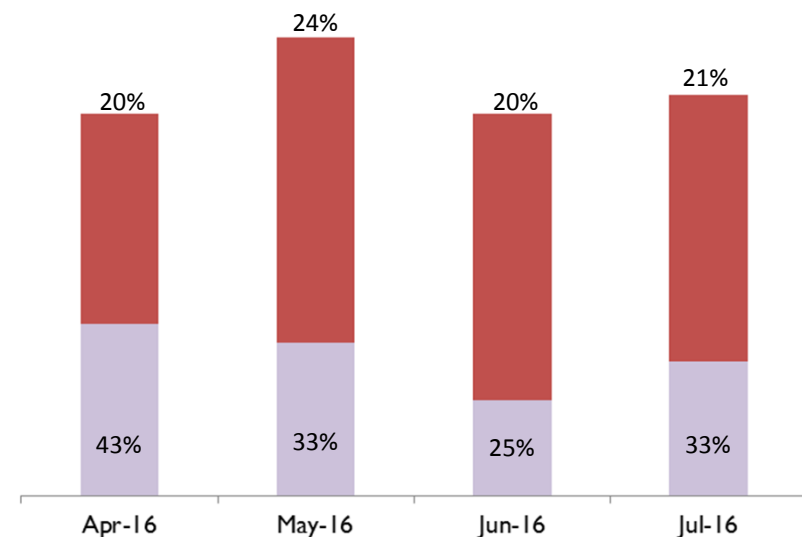
Of the referrals received in the period April to July, 21.3% (459) were known or had been previously known to the LST. Approximately one third (151) were where the LSTs had formally requested that the family were ‘stepped up’ to social care for statutory involvement; the remainder were direct referrals to First Response from partner agencies on the basis of an immediate safeguarding concern.

### Actions

This is the first time that we have cross-matched the LST and Social Care two data sources in order to investigate the extent to which LST intervention is impacting in statutory social work. As a legitimate indicator of the extent to which LSTs are making a difference – particularly if tracked over time – this will be a rich source of information and we will continue to investigate this further.

Once we have a reliable set of trend data, then targets can be set for a reduction in the overall figure and an increase in the proportion of that figure that are cases stepped up.

Bar chart top show the % of referrals accepted by Social Care for assessment, where the family have been known previously to the LST either as an open case, or for Early Help Assessment. Within these are shown the % of these referrals where the family was accepted through the formal ‘step up’ process.



# Impact

## Feedback from Young People – Summary of responses

At the point that the LST conclude their involvement with young people, they offer all young people the opportunity to complete a short survey. This survey process is managed via the Voice Project & Business Improvement Team, who will collate and analyse the feedback.

### **66 feedback forms were received from young people**

- 92% (60) said they were happy that it had been explained what was happening and why
- 87% (57) said they were involved and included
- 92% (60) had a chance to share their ideas and support needed
- 87% (57) thought they were listened to and that their views were used
- 95% (63) felt the support worker was kind and easy to talk to
- 83% (55) were happy that the help they had made things better for their family and them, however 16% were unsure (10)
- 78% (51) feel life is better because of the help they had, 16% (10) were unsure and 6% (4) felt sad

# Impact

## Feedback from Parents/Carers– Summary of responses

At the point that the LST conclude their involvement with families, they offer all parents / carers the opportunity to complete a short survey. This survey process is managed via the Voice Project and Business Improvement Team, who will collate and analyse the feedback.

### **82 feedback forms were received from parents/ carers**

96% (78) felt happy about the explanation about why support had been offered and understood what was happening and why

98% (80) were happy about how they had been involved and included in the process

95% (77) said they were happy that they had a chance to set some of the tasks to be completed

93% (76) felt happy they were listened to and views were considered

98% (80) stated their support worker was supportive and easy to talk to

92% (75) reported that support received has helped the family to make positive changes to their lives, 4% (3) were unsure and 2% felt sad (1)

96% (78) were happy with the service they received

## Impact Feedback from Schools – Summary of responses

At the point that the LST conclude their involvement with families, they offer schools the opportunity to complete a short survey. This survey process is managed via the Voice Project and Business Improvement Team, who will collate and analyse the feedback.

### **24 feedback forms were received from schools in Lichfield, Moorlands, Newcastle, Stafford & Tamworth**

- 21 said they were invited to comment on the proposed conclusion of LST involvement and agreed with the decision
- 19 schools were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the impact on attendance
- 20 were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the impact on improving behaviour
- 19 school reported that they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the impact on wellbeing
- 20 schools responded they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the impact on family engagement
- 22 schools said they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the time taken by the LST to respond to their initial enquiry
- 22 were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with threshold definition/management of this case by the LST



# Impact

## Feedback from Schools – Summary of responses (cont.)

- 23 were satisfied with how the LST communicated updates on this case & its progression
- 23 stated they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with consistency of practice and decision-making
- 23 said they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with staffing capacity/availability
- 19 Schools said they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with Step up/down to statutory social work
- All said that LST workers had the right skills and knowledge to do their job and worked well in partnership
- 23 responded they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the focus on outcomes for children
- 23 reported they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the service they received from the LST in this case