

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **16 June 2014**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **THRIVE progress report**

Purpose of report: **To update the Scrutiny Committee on the outcomes of the THRIVE programme at the end of the second year.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to note the progress update on the THRIVE programme activities at Appendix 1

1. Background and context

1.1 Children's Service Scrutiny Committee last received an update on the THRIVE programme in June 2013 following the end of the first year of this complex and high profile programme. This update takes in to account achievements and the direction of travel in the second year of the programme, and highlights priorities and challenges for the final year.

2. Financial Appraisal

2.1 The THRIVE programme was established against a background of escalating demand and costs for Children's Social Care. The externally produced Outline Business Case projected rising costs over the three year period, and these higher costs have been avoided at the end of the second year. Recent financial evaluation work found evidence that the underlying causes of higher spending are being tackled by the department, although there is further financial evaluation work to be undertaken. The financial outlook for the County Council beyond the end of the programme presents a range of challenges. These, and the financial impact of activities to date, are covered in Section 6 of the attached progress report (appendix 1).

3. Supporting Information

3.1 THRIVE has required changes to be made across our system of support and services, and in the second year of the programme we have focused on implementing the results of comprehensive service reviews undertaken in Year 1. The progress report attached at Appendix 1 takes each of the key service areas in turn to explain key achievements and the focus of work in the final year. Appendix 2 provides the committee with key performance information that is used by the THRIVE Executive Board and Programme Team to monitor activity.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

4.1 Scrutiny Committee are recommended to note the appended report and the achievements and challenges identified, and comment on areas that would benefit from particular focus and further discussion as we work towards the end of this key transformation initiative.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

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Local members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix 1: THRIVE Progress report

Appendix 2: Key performance data

Appendix 3: Conclusions and recommendations from the THRIVE interim evaluation

THRIVE Programme Overview at the end of Year 2

1. Introduction

- 1.1 THRIVE is an ambitious demand-management programme that seeks to deliver improved outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in the county whilst ensuring a financially sustainable model of support and intervention for those at risk. It was approved with cross-party support in 2012, with £9.7m of financial support set aside if needed, and the second year of the programme has just ended.
- 1.2 In the first year of the programme services were subject to comprehensive review, new initiatives trialled, and pilot programmes established. In the second year the recommendations of these reviews and from early activity were implemented to put in place a re-designed model of support across Early Help services, Locality Social Care, and Looked After Children's services. The third year of the programme will focus on embedding changes in practice and systems, mainstreaming the activity that has generated the best results, and undertaking a thorough evaluation of the programme.
- 1.3 As we enter that third year of the programme we have used an external consultant to help us undertake an interim evaluation of THRIVE to assess whether changes are taking place as intended. In addition in March 2013 Ofsted offered further external validation when they reported that our safeguarding arrangements were 'good' following an unannounced four week inspection in January. The inspection report made a number of positive comments in relation to the THRIVE programme, stating that the programme is 'clearly having a positive impact on improving outcomes for children and families'. It reported that THRIVE is:

*driving the local authority's improvement for children and families...
underpinned by good partnership arrangements, a high quality workforce
strategy and a robust system of external review and evaluation.*

- 1.4 The recently completed interim evaluation of the programme made a number of positive findings. The conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation are attached at Appendix 3 and the executive summary will be circulated shortly. The findings were based on a range of interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires with over 401 respondents, and concluded that:

...THRIVE is on track and contributing towards shaping more effective, targeted interventions with children, young people and families across the continuum of need.

- 1.5 The majority of performance indicators within the programme have been heading in the right direction during Year 2, suggesting that THRIVE activity is having the desired effect on reducing demand for high cost services whilst still ensuring good outcomes for children. These are detailed in Appendix 2. We have moved much closer to the activity levels of our statistical neighbours in terms of key activities such as referrals to children's social care, social care assessments, and rates of care proceedings, which has supported us in reducing costs.
- 1.6 The major exception to this is a recent and significant increase in the number of children and young people who require Child Protection Plans, which is discussed in more detail below. Whilst a positive trajectory has been maintained in terms of reducing the number of Looked After Children there were 11 more children in care than we had aimed for at the end of the financial year, and the end of programme target remains challenging.

- 1.7 Section five of this report gives more detail on the work undertaken to assess the financial impact of the programme activities to date. It explains how the significant projected increase in spend has been avoided, key spending targets met, and savings made, but highlights the need to make further savings as a result of ongoing reductions in public sector spending and the risk that this places on sustaining some of the elements of the programme.

2. Taking a partnership approach

- 2.1 Although led by the Children's Service Department it is crucial that THRIVE is delivered alongside our partner organisations and fully involves them. Our evaluation and inspection suggest that this has been the case in the first two years of the programme. 75% of evaluation survey respondents reported that THRIVE has increased inter-agency coordination of support for children and young people, and partnership arrangements were praised by Ofsted.
- 2.2 The multi-agency Executive Board has overseen communication and engagement activity that has included conferences, bulletins, briefings for particular groups such as headteachers, and regularly updated web content. A multi-agency approach has been taken to our workforce development programme and our evaluation work.
- 2.3 THRIVE is also a joint endeavour with other departments of the County Council, in particular with those commissioning services for adults. New Adult Substance Misuse services commissioned in this year have been designed to reflect the need for different approaches to parents who misuse substances, and the new Domestic Abuse Strategy is aligned to the approaches within THRIVE and the services that can support families in which Domestic Abuse is taking place, or recovering from Domestic Abuse.

3. Development of Early Help support

- 3.1 A key aim of the THRIVE programme is to increase the availability of earlier help to young people and families that need it, and in this way to reduce their needs and improve their outcomes without requiring further support from Children's Social Care. As a result of the programme and investment from the THRIVE fund, over 1000 more children and young people received Early Help support in the last year. Comparing Quarter 3 of 2013-14 with the first quarter of the programme, the number of families receiving targeted Early Help has increased by 30%. In addition, better targeting of Early Help support has meant that fewer children requiring social care attention are coming from 'left-field' without a prior offer of help. 76% of families receiving targeted Early Help services completing feedback following support report that their lives have changed for the better as a result of the service offered.
- 3.2 For the first time Ofsted included Early Help services within the recent inspection, finding that in East Sussex 'focused investment in early help services effectively targets the most vulnerable families' and that:

Where children and families would benefit from early help services, suitably trained and skilled Family Keyworkers deliver high quality early help support packages. They act as a single point of contact for the family, providing direct support and coordinating additional interventions from a range of services and organisations. Early help assessments are effective in determining the level of need and are suitably outcome-focused.

- 3.3 Through our multi-agency Early Help strategy in the last year we have completed significant restructuring and re-commissioning of services, clarified roles and responsibilities, introduced new multi-agency decision-making forums, and developed the skills of our workforce to confidently address the issues that children and families are facing. Our mid-term evaluation showed that 9 out of 10 of those taking part in new training opportunities reported improvements in their practice as a result with high praise for the quality of training offered.

- 3.4 Central to changes in Early Help service practice is the implementation of the Family Keywork model. This model provides a more flexible period of intervention with families, ensures the offer of challenge, support and hands-on practical help where they are needed, and looks to address issues across the family including addressing adult needs that are preventing children developing well. The model is championed nationally through the Troubled Families programme. In East Sussex, rather than having a separate Troubled Families service, the programme is mainstreamed so that a number of different services provide Family Keywork, contributing to the targets set by the national programme in terms of families in particular circumstances whose lives are “turned round”.
- 3.5 As we enter Year 3 of the programme priority now shifts to ensuring that this whole Family Keywork model is being applied consistently and effectively across Early Help, and to re-assessing and adjusting the mechanisms that we have put in place so far. In looking at how we continue to deliver Early Help services at this level and of this quality in the future we need to look again at the capacity that we need in these services, how that can be most efficiently staffed and managed, and what external funding opportunities are available to support this, including the extension of the Troubled Families programme in 2015/2016.

4 Children’s Social Care – Child Protection teams

- 4.1 At the start of the THRIVE programme East Sussex was significantly out of line with comparable areas in terms of Child Protection activity. Within two years we have had a substantial impact on moving more in line with other areas in terms of demand for Children’s Social Care support. Amongst the data attached at Appendix 2 are charts showing East Sussex activity levels against the national average and expected level given local deprivation factors.
- 4.2 This information shows that referrals for Children’s Social Care support have decreased dramatically as a result of the changes we have made in information and advice for other professionals, and the more efficient ways in which Early Help support is offered as an alternative to unnecessary Social Care assessments. The overall caseload in our social care services has reduced, allowing social workers to devote more time to the most complex families where children face the greatest level of risk. The Ofsted inspection report praised the quality of relationships seen between children and families and our social care staff, and could see the difference that these were making.
- 4.3 These changes have supported a continued reduction in the number of children where we need to be in legal proceedings, and care proceedings themselves have become quicker as a result of our investment – saving money on external assessments and through speeding up the process. Increasingly we are finding alternative carers for children and young people within their wider family network where their parents cannot provide safe care – an outcome that is often much better for children.
- 4.4 The changes that we have made, both in Early Help and within Child Protection Teams, have also enabled reduced spend against the base budget for the Locality Social Care area, in line with the MTFP plans.
- 4.5 In January we launched a new specialist service for mothers who have had successive children taken in to care – based on working with them to address underlying issues and prevent further care admissions. This service will be key to preventing the ‘revolving door’ and is modelled on successful projects elsewhere in the country.
- 4.6 The number of children and young people requiring a Child Protection Plan reduced significantly in the first year of the programme, but the second year has seen a slowing down in the number of plans that have been ended. There are a variety of factors affecting this. These include our focus on ensuring that sufficient change has taken place to prevent

future Child Protection Plans being necessary, and the aim to find safe alternatives to care proceedings which may mean that some children stay with family members but need additional monitoring in order to ensure that this is the right decision.

- 4.7 A lower rate of new Child Protection Plans held for most of the last year but rose sharply between January and March 2014. This rise combined with the lower rate of plans coming to an end means that we have ended the year significantly above the THRIVE target. It is important that these crucial decisions about children and young people's safety are taken on a case by case basis and reflect their needs. However it is also critical at this stage that we interrogate the recent increase in demand, and case by case analysis is being commissioned seeking to understand the potential contribution of THRIVE changes to this and what we might change now so that East Sussex has equivalent activity levels of other good authorities.

5 Children's Social Care – care placements

- 5.1 A key ambition of the THRIVE programme is to reduce the number of children and young people that need to be in local authority care. We are working to achieve this in a range of ways: working to resolve issues that prevent families from caring for their children, increasing the use of long term family and friends care, and by increasing the number of children that can be adopted. Where remaining in care is the best option for a child or young person, THRIVE investment is aimed at securing this more cost-effectively.
- 5.2 The number of Looked After Children in East Sussex has steadily declined throughout the programme, with two successive years in which more children and young people left care than entered a new care placement, and numbers admitted to care have been much lower than before. The total number of children and young people who have had Looked After status at some point during the year has declined during the programme (from 800 in 2011/12 to 774 in 2013/14).
- 5.3 We have had particular success in expanding our ability to find adoptive and family and friends placements for children and young people, and in speeding up the adoption process. Our adoption service was judged to be outstanding in the recent Ofsted inspection, which is a rare accolade, and in the two years of the THRIVE programme we have approved 84 new potential adopters against the 53 approved in the previous two years. As well as being good for children and young people, adoption also lowers the ongoing costs of care that ESCC needs to meet, and the mid-term evaluation estimates that at least £600k of spend has been avoided through greater adoption rates.
- 5.4 The impact of our investment in recruiting more ESCC foster carers has meant that we have a greater ability to match those needing a placement to the most cost-effective option that still provides well for them. We have achieved a net increase in ESCC foster carers in the year, recruiting 86 new carers during the THRIVE period against 53 in the previous two years. The estimated financial impact of this up to December 2013 within the mid-term evaluation is that at least £400k additional spend has been avoided.
- 5.5 We have also been working to improve the value for money within support services for Looked After Children, such as the supervised contact that they have with their birth families. This was an area where spending exceeded budget prior to THRIVE and costs have fallen by £504k as a result of reduced demand and use of more cost-effective options that provide better quality.
- 5.6 Whilst there is a positive trajectory on the number of Looked After Children, we have not reached the THRIVE target of 560 LAC by the end of 2013/14, with 571 children in care at the end of the year. The end of programme target of 520 children in care would require us to have 51 fewer children in care at the end of the next 12 months. Looking at benchmarking information this would place us below comparable authorities, however it is

a key target for the programme because of the impact on the budget of care placements and the efforts described above will continue to be taken forward to achieve it safely.

- 5.7 The Ofsted inspection highlighted and confirmed to us that there is more to be done in East Sussex to improve the experiences of those leaving care and becoming adults, which is being addressed in a specific action plan and reflected in the THRIVE programme plan for the next year.

6 Financial impact

- 6.1 The higher level and upward trajectory of child protection activity in East Sussex seen prior to the THRIVE programme created a significant pressure on the Children's Services Department budget. One of the key aims of THRIVE is to create a financially sustainable system of support for vulnerable children and young people, and key to this is reducing spend safely.
- 6.2 The THRIVE mid-term evaluation looked not only at workforce feedback but also at the evidence of financial impact of investment and change activities. This analysis found that Children's Social Care spend has reduced in line with the targets in the THRIVE business case, and highlighted key areas where costs are being avoided through reduced demand or better value for money. The evaluation work recommended a programme of further and more detailed financial analysis and evaluation that should take place now that the activity of the programme is embedded.
- 6.3 Of particular note within the evaluation is the work undertaken on care placement costs over the THRIVE period. This is one of our most challenging areas of spend, and it contains a high degree of 'legacy' costs where ongoing spend is required based on historic placement requirements. LAC placement costs excluding in-house residential placements rose by 32% and 19% in the two years prior to the programme. In the first two years of the programme this cost pressure has been reduced to 2% in Year 1, and 3% in Year 2. The greater pressure in 2013-14 was mostly driven by increasing costs of external residential placements rather than by growth in the numbers of children placed. Spend on agency foster care placements reduced in this period for the first time in several years.
- 6.4 Although Children's Social Care spending has reduced to within the original budget targets set, the County Council faces ongoing grant reductions and the savings requirements for the Children's Service Department within the MTFP mean that this target budget no longer represents a sustainable level of spend. As a result, further reductions in spend are now necessary within Children's Social Care. Some of these can continue to be delivered by THRIVE activity in the final year of the programme and potentially beyond. However this means it is unlikely that all of the activity supported through the THRIVE programme can be sustained at the same level, and the Children's Services Department Senior Management Team, together with the multi-agency THRIVE Executive Board, are planning for the implications of this through a programme exit plan.
- 6.5 By reaching these spending targets we have avoided the predicted rise in spend that drove the business case for the THRIVE programme. Spend in 2012/13 was £6.4m lower than the projected spend without the programme. Spend in 2013/14 was £6.4m lower than the projected spend without the programme.
- 6.6 The original business plan for THRIVE identified that up to £9.7m may be required to bring about the desired changes. In the second year £3.9m additional funding has been used within the programme. This is in addition to the many activities and services that we are now delivering differently that are paid for from base budget funding. £1.4m has been spent on new activities and programme support, and £2.6m has been spent on placements for children whilst we work to reduce the cost pressure in this area.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 At the end of the second year of the THRIVE transformation programme there are many positive outcomes from the programme to report, with external validation on progress and the quality of work undertaken as we change our system of support for vulnerable children and young people. We are making significant changes safely and our workforce believes that it is making a difference to children and young people, with 75% of respondents in our evaluation having a high level of confidence that THRIVE is improving outcomes.
- 7.2 Financial impact has been shown, with evidence that key drivers of previous increasing costs are being addressed. The predicted cost of services without the investment and change activity was £12.8m higher than has been spent in Children's Social Care in the two year period, including the spend from the THRIVE reserve, whilst the departmental budget has decreased in line with the MTFP. However the pressure on funds available to the County Council means that further savings on this budget will be required that may require the scaling back of the service offer developed through THRIVE. There is more to do to understand and evidence the financial impact of the programme and the extent to which these financial benefits can be sustained, including which activities have made the clearest contribution to reducing spend.
- 7.3 We end the year with the major building blocks of a revised system in place. In the two years of the programme so far we have:
- implemented new processes to improve the identification and proactive offer of support to families in need
 - re-designed assessment and planning processes across social care and early help services so that they are outcome-focused, proportional to need, and family-friendly
 - changed the emphasis of support for families through relationship-based practice and the Family Keywork model
 - put in place new measures to strengthen frontline practice – through a combination of a comprehensive multi-agency training programme, strengthened management and supervision where necessary and access to expert safeguarding support and advice.
 - become quicker at key processes, such as carer recruitment, adoption matching, and care proceedings
 - 'turned the curve' on escalating costs, and substantially reduced the growth pressure on the care placement budget in particular
- 7.4 There are however a number of areas that require particular vigilance to ensure that the programme is having the desired effect. Principal amongst these is understanding fully the recent rise in Child Protection Plans and whether particular activity needs to be re-focused or changed to address this. We also need to recognise that a faster rate of reduction in the number of Looked After Children will be required if the target for the end of the programme is to be reached.
- 7.5 The focus of the third year of the programme will be evaluation, review, adjustment and consolidation – particularly in light of the findings of case audit and analysis. Planning for the end of the programme is underway with a particular focus on sustaining activities within a reducing budget and making decisions around those areas of investment that it is most important to mainstream in the future to continue the positive trajectory.

THRIVE activity at the end of Year 2: Key indicators

This set of data is a sample from the comprehensive 'dashboard' that is reviewed quarterly by the THRIVE Programme Team and the THRIVE Executive Board. In this set key indicators are presented over the past three or four years to identify the trend within the period of the THRIVE programme. They should be interpreted alongside the report 'THRIVE Programme Outcomes in Year 2'.

Pages 2 – 4 show charts for:

- Rate of referrals to Children's Social Care
- Rate of re-referrals to Children's Social Care
- Rate of Children's Social Care led assessment
- Rate of Children in Need
- Rate of Child Protection Plans
- Rate of Looked After Children

These show the most recent year in orange, the England Local Authority average in a shaded box, and what might be expected to be the level of activity in East Sussex based on deprivation factors taking in to account the performance of other similar areas. Where a THRIVE target exists this is shown as a yellow diamond on the chart.

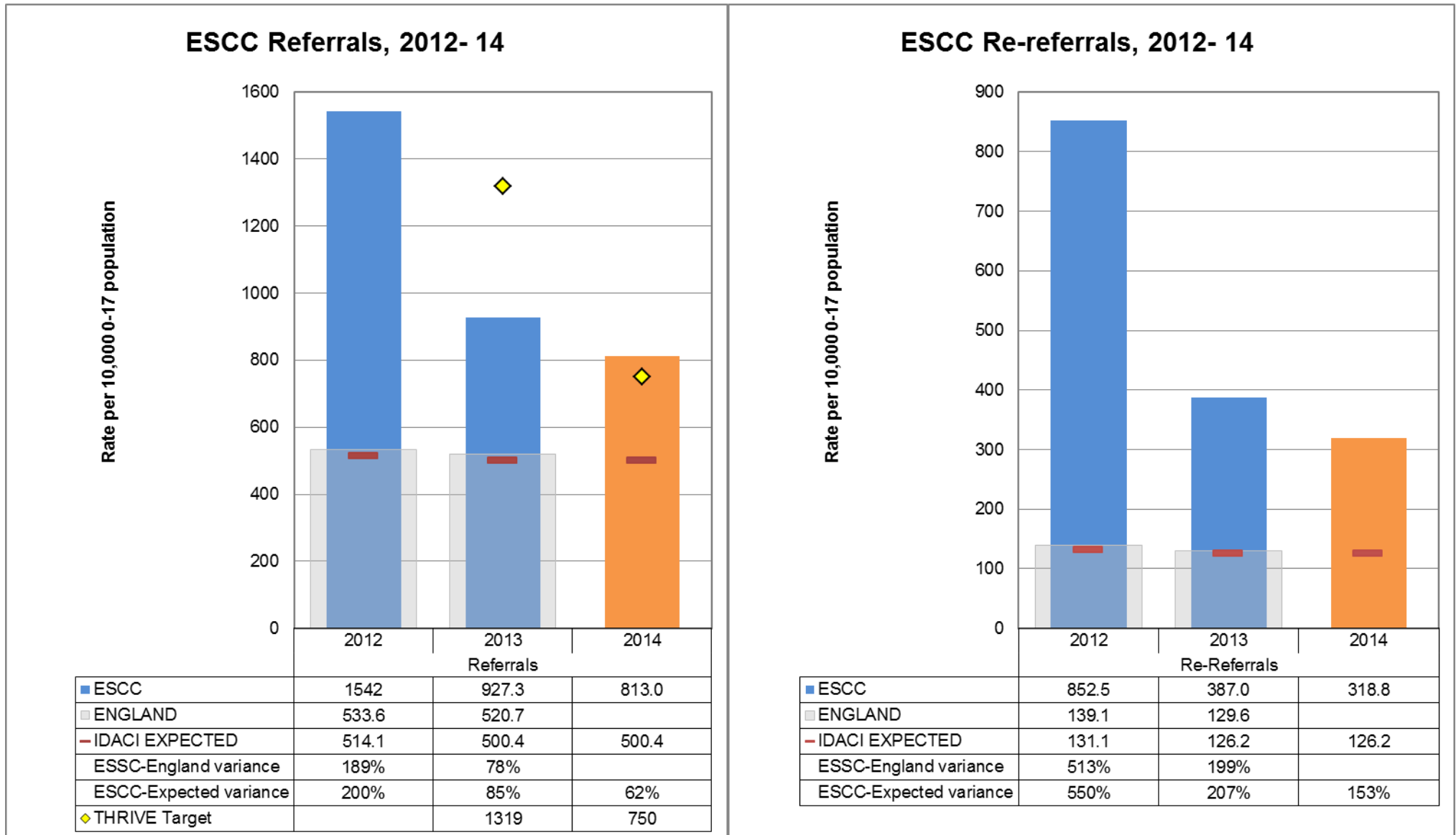
Note that there was a data entry issue in relation to referrals in 2014 which, when corrected for, means that the THRIVE target was achieved. Also note that comparisons on rates of Children's Social Care assessment are difficult at present as other authorities are changing their assessment approaches and how these are counted.

Page 5 shows increases in the recruitment of foster carers and potential adopters.

Page 6 shows the increase in the number of children and households receiving a targeted Early Help service.

East Sussex 2012-14 vs. England and expected based on IDACI

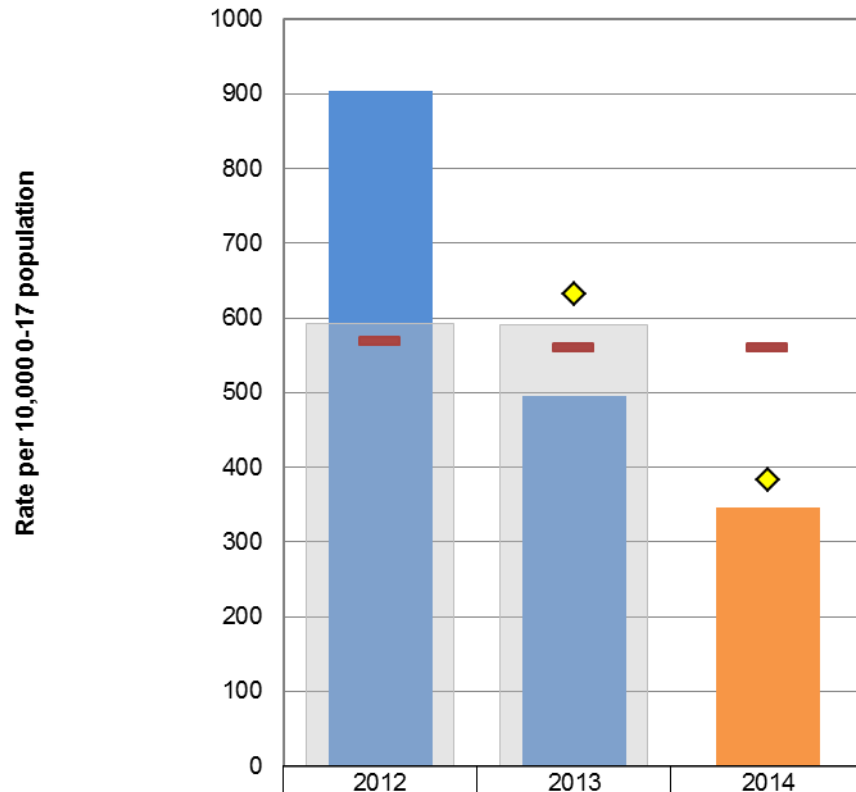
Expected rates unavailable for 2014- those shown are the 2013 Expected rates.



East Sussex 2012-14 vs. England and expected based on IDACI

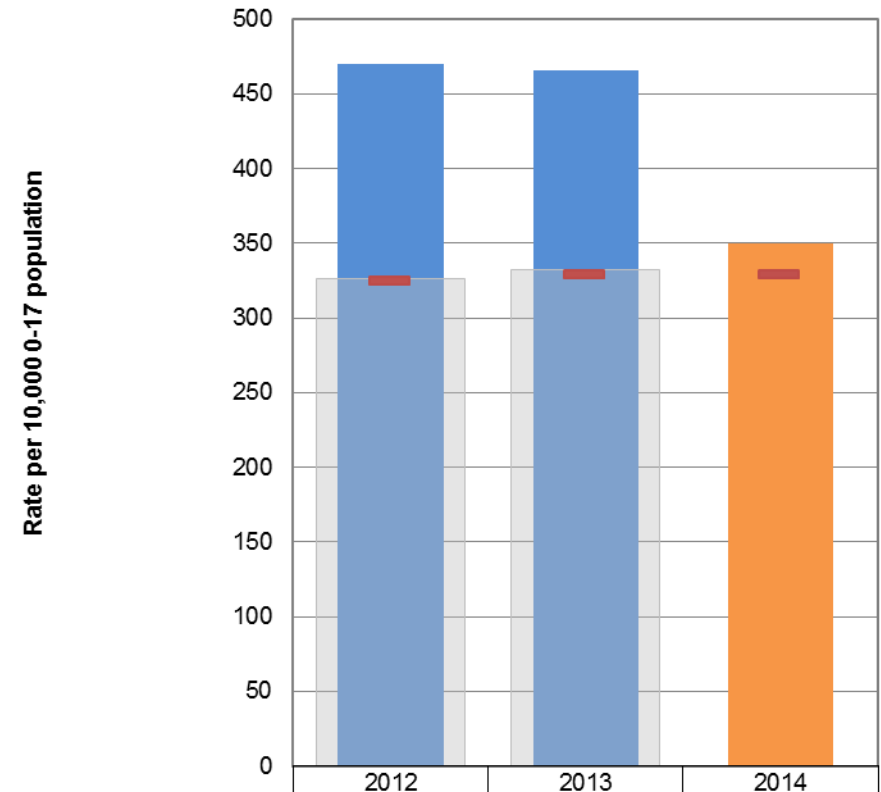
Expected rates unavailable for 2014- those shown are the 2013 Expected rates.

ESCC Assessments, 2012- 14



	2012	2013	2014
■ ESCC	904.2	496.3	346.1
■ ENGLAND	592.7	591.6	
— IDACI EXPECTED	568.3	559.6	559.6
ESCC-England variance	53%	-16%	
ESCC-Expected variance	59%	-11%	-38%
◆ THRIVE Target		632	384

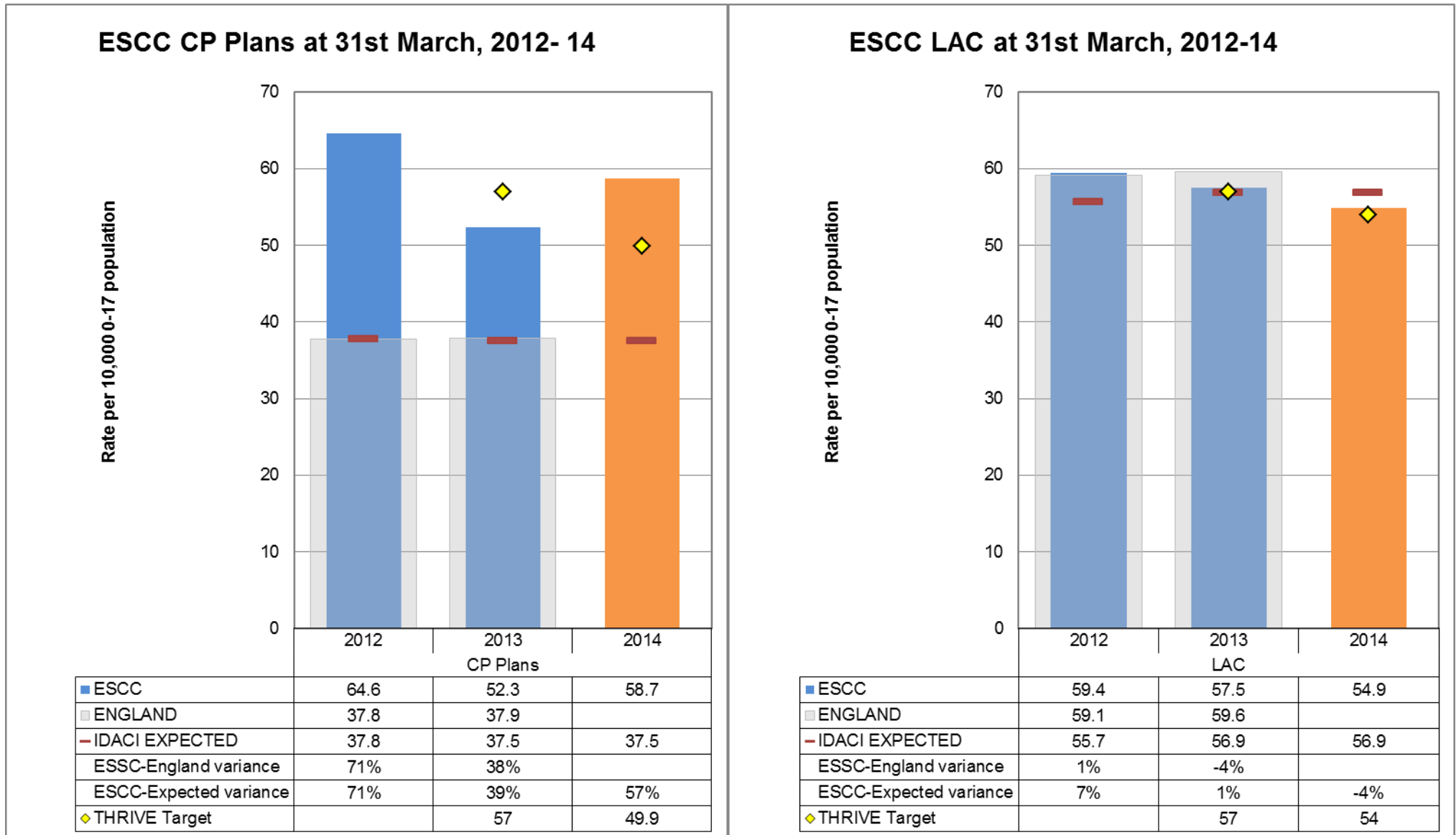
ESCC CIN at 31st March, 2012- 14



	2012	2013	2014
■ ESCC	469.9	465.8	349.5
■ ENGLAND	326.0	332.2	
— IDACI EXPECTED	324.9	329.1	329.1
ESCC-England variance	44%	40%	
ESCC-Expected variance	45%	42%	6%

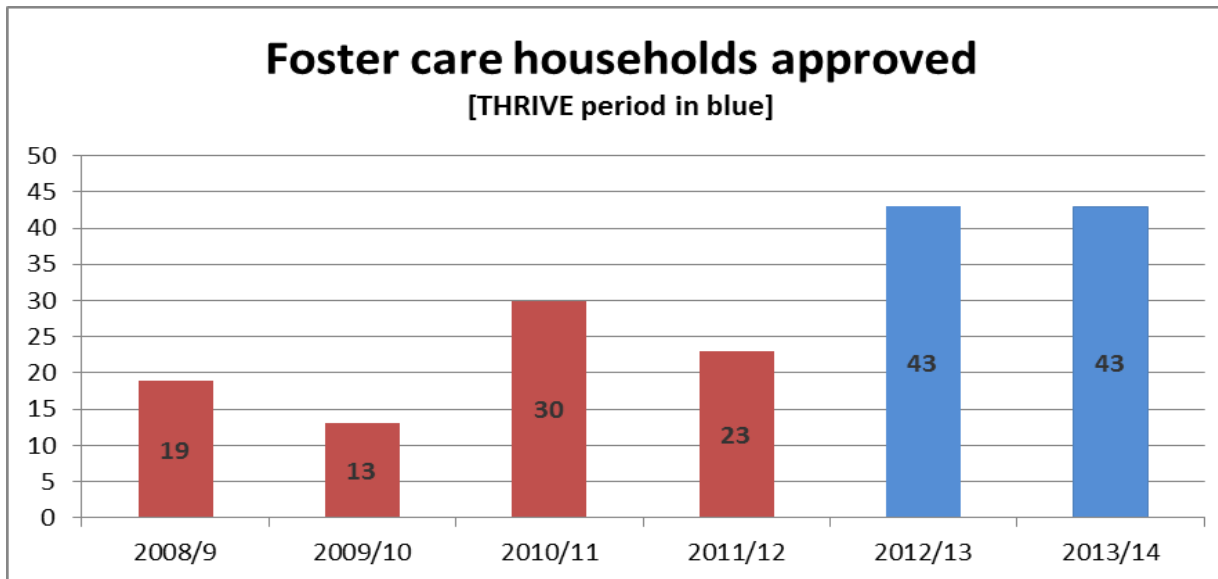
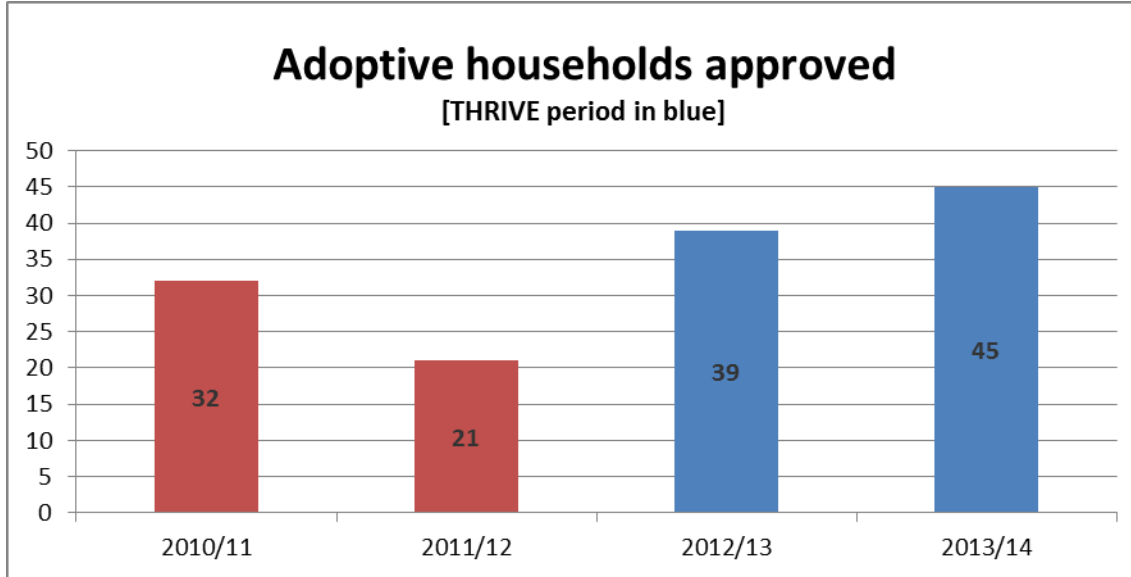
East Sussex 2012-14 vs. England and expected based on IDACI

Expected rates unavailable for 2014- those shown are the 2013 Expected rates.



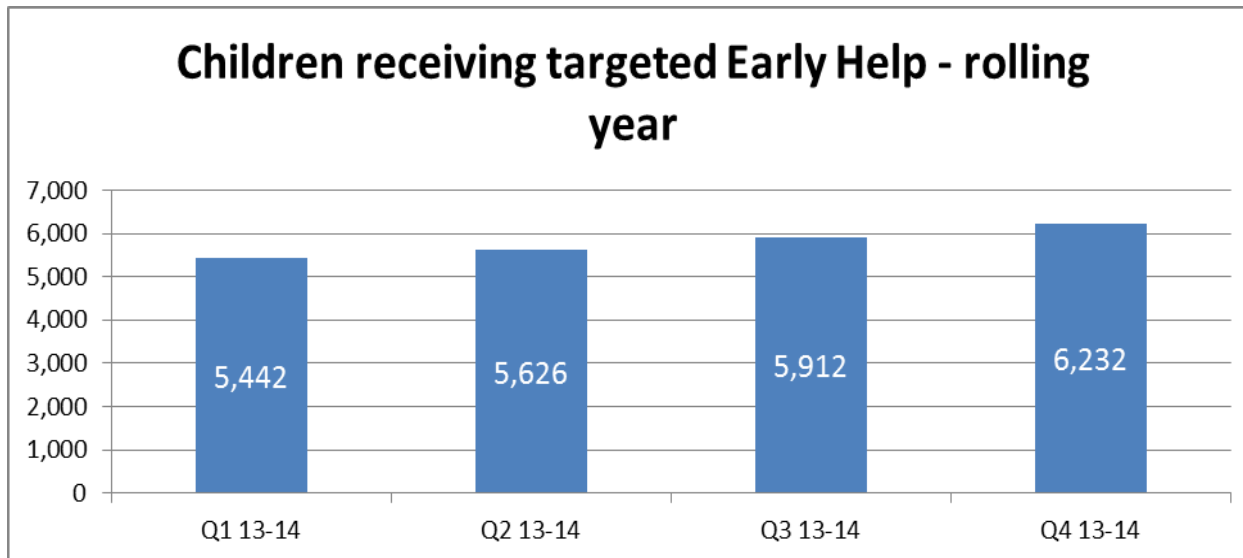
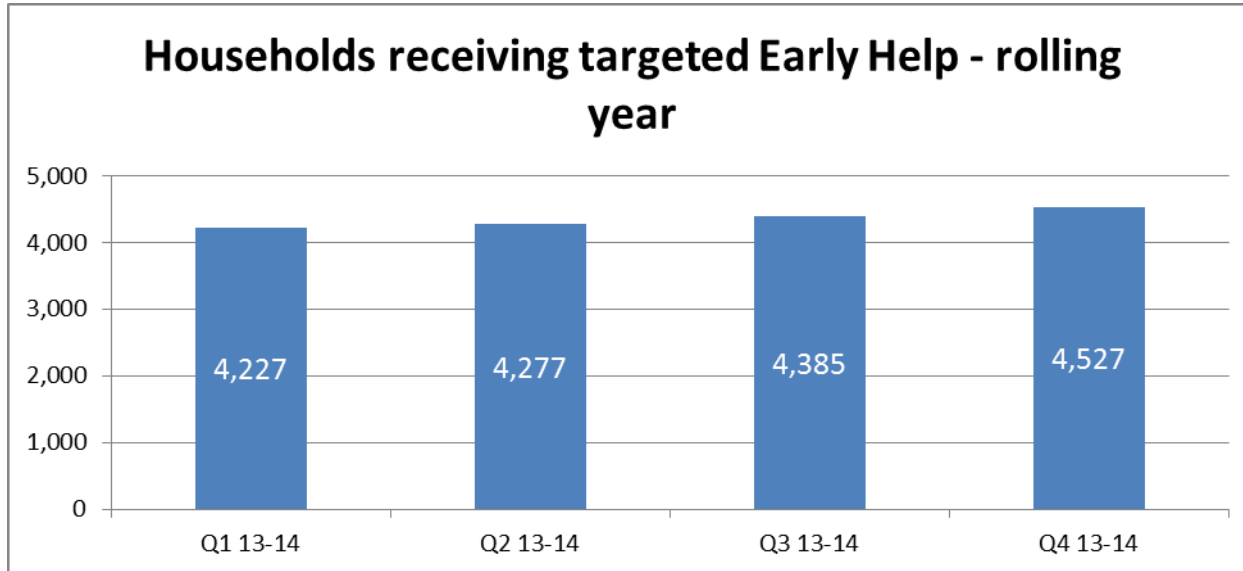
Fostering and adoption recruitment

Some THRIVE investment has been directed in specific projects to increase recruitment of ESCC foster carers and prospective adopters. Both of these areas have shown increased activity and outputs during the THRIVE period. Adoption efforts were also assisted by the national Adoption Reform Grant. The financial evaluation of the programme will include assessment of the return on investment in these areas.



Reach of Targeted Early Help

Increasing the number of children supported by targeted Early Help services is a key priority for THRIVE. These charts show the number of children and young people who received that support in the twelve months previous to that quarter, illustrating an increasing reach.



Conclusions and recommendations from the interim evaluation of THRIVE

The full text, and Executive Summary, of the interim evaluation will be published shortly. The agreed conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

Conclusion One

The principles of THRIVE, underpinned by the desire to provide earlier help in order to produce better outcomes for children, young people and families, has broad support from across the workforce. In addition, THRIVE has successfully generated substantial positivity from most partners, crucial to its on-going success.

Conclusion Two

The workforce are responding to THRIVE's challenge by adopting new ways of working with children, young people and families, including more coordinated multi-agency working and greater information sharing. While THRIVE has brought greater clarity to professionals' roles and responsibilities, there is scope to take this further, particularly in some partnerships.

Conclusion Three

There is sufficient evidence that the THRIVE Programme is contributing towards building a skilled, confident and proactive workforce, and that managers are adapting their support to frontline practitioners, enabling the implementation of new ways of working. The full extent of changes in management support practices may require more time for their effects to be felt by frontline practitioners broadly, and should be the focus of further assessment in subsequent evaluations.

Conclusion Four

While the workforce appear to have relished the challenges THRIVE has presented, concerning reports have been noted from evaluation participants of increasing levels of work-related stress and anxiety caused primarily by working with more complex cases, adoption of the whole-family approach and associated paperwork.

Conclusion Five

THRIVE's suite of learning and development opportunities have received considerable praise from evaluation participants. Frustrations in relation to the supply and intensity of training provision have been noted.

Conclusion Six

The evaluation has gathered sufficient evidence to demonstrate that THRIVE is on track and contributing towards shaping more effective, targeted interventions with children, young people and families across the continuum of need. Evidence shows increased spend on targeted Early Help, and increased reach of targeted Early Help services.

Conclusion Seven

The evaluation notes levels of concern from evaluation participants regarding the perceived loss of some level two services for some families and the need to monitor carefully those level two families to prevent any escalation of need.

Conclusion Eight

Evaluation participants from Children's Community Health services have viewed THRIVE least positively across all evaluation question areas, with concerns regarding client confidentiality at Team Around the Family meetings and the role of the Keyworker being the most commonly cited concerns.

This suggest more needs to be done to engage Children's Community Health colleagues, to understand their unique perspectives and to encourage their valued contribution to the THRIVE Programme.

Conclusion Nine

Encouraging early signs of THRIVE's impact on children, young people and families, while embryonic, are observable in some cases, indicating that THRIVE is helping to empower children, young people and families to make important decisions and to work in trusting partnerships with the workforce.

Conclusion Ten

An assessment of the financial impact of THRIVE on reducing demand for costly social care services has shown overall spending on Children's Social Care has reduced in line with THRIVE's business case targets, with evidence showing a decrease in demand for Children's Social Care services.

Recommendations

Recommendation One

The Evaluation Steering Group should develop a communication plan to support the dissemination of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations contained within this report in appropriate, accessible formats, for a range of stakeholders. This should include clear messages about next steps for the THRIVE Programme addressing the various issues and concerns raised by the evaluation.

Recommendation Two

Action is required to understand in greater detail the factors that are inhibiting certain workforce groups from more fully understanding the roles and responsibilities of Keyworkers. An action plan to enable greater clarity should be informed, developed and implemented based on this additional intelligence.

Recommendation Three

Reports of increased levels of work-related stress and anxiety require further investigation to ensure that appropriate and responsive levels of support are in place for all, this should include an assessment of human resource data.

Recommendation Four

The provision of learning and development opportunities should be commensurate with demand and offered in less intensive blocks, over longer periods of time and on a rolling programme. Ways of creatively promoting learning and development opportunities should be explored, using a range of media to appeal to as broad an audience as possible.

Recommendation Five

Further investigation is required to understand the challenges which are limiting greater engagement of key partners in the THRIVE Programme. This could involve a series of Round Table discussions to identify barriers and co-create solutions, for example.

Recommendation Six

Establish a clearer understanding of the financial impact of the THRIVE Programme through the provision of on-going commitment, retention of knowledge and support from key teams within the Business Services Department at East Sussex County Council. This will need to take in to account a fuller set of demand and spend information in order to identify the extent to which causality can be asserted through evaluation.