

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST**

### Agenda Item Cover Sheet

TITLE OF PAPER: Report of the Performance & Commissioning Sub-Group

DATE OF MEETING: 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011

ORGANISATION/SUB GROUP: Performance and Commissioning

RELATED CYPP IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY: WT4 Active Performance  
Management

WT1-WT5: Working Together

RELATED PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S): ALL

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF PAPER:

The Board:

(i) Notes the Report

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NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

02 February 2011

**Report of the Performance and Commissioning Sub-Group**

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update the Board on a range of performance issues

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Board notes the report

2.2 That the Board notes the concerns raised about the delivery of the Looked After Children Health Strategy and considers its preferred way forward to resolve this.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 CYPP Priority WT4 commits the Children's Trust to active performance management. This report updates the Board on the following performance and related issues:

- 2010 Annual Assessment of Children's Services
- Children's Social Care Improvement Plan
- Unannounced Inspection
- Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire
- Looked After Children Health Strategy

4.0 2010 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

4.1 In December Ofsted published the 2010 Annual Assessments of children's services. North Yorkshire's services for children and young people were rated as 'performs well'. Ofsted reported that the vast majority of provision is good or outstanding, and outcomes for service users are impressive.

4.2 The full text of the Annual Assessment, enclosed as Appendix A, highlights many positive features of local service provision, including:

- Be Healthy: work to encourage healthy lifestyles is very successful. Notable achievements include greater take-up of school lunches, reduced levels of childhood obesity, and higher numbers of physically active children and young people.
- Stay Safe: a very large majority of services and settings are good or outstanding at keeping children and young people safe. Safeguarding arrangements have been enhanced following the 2009 inspections, but some room for improvement remains.
- Enjoy and Achieve: a very large majority of services and settings are good or outstanding at helping children and young people to enjoy their learning and achieve well. Attainment levels are impressive across most subject areas and age groups.

- Make A Positive Contribution: arrangements for involving young people in shaping services are strong. Comparatively high numbers of young people participate in extra-curricular activities which benefit themselves and others.
  - Economic Well-Being: most settings provide high quality support to help young people gain relevant knowledge and develop employment skills. Comparatively few young people are not engaged in education, training or work.
- 4.4 Ofsted praised the Children and Young People's Plan review, commenting favourably on the use of performance information and user feedback to evaluate progress.
- 4.5 The Annual Assessment identified two main areas for improvement:
- Raise achievement levels of young people who receive free school meals
  - Reduce re-offending rates and increase the proportion of young offenders engaged in education, training or employment.
- 4.6 In December the government signalled its intention to discontinue the annual assessments of children's services. Formally, this will require legislation because Ofsted currently has a statutory duty, enshrined in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to report annually on local authority children's services.
- 5.0 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN
- 5.1 In September the Children's Trust Board received a report which summarised the conclusion of Post-Inspection Action Plan implementation and introduced a successor Improvement Plan for Children's Social Care. This Improvement Plan is organised into six main sections as follows:
- Consistent management and operational practice
  - Performance management culture
  - Accountable financial management
  - MTFS change programme
  - ICS recovery and implementation
  - High quality workforce
- 5.2 The work to embed consistent management and operational practice has several strands. One strand is a restructure of management arrangements in children's social care, and this work remains in development. Another strand is to strengthen practice by embedding revised national guidance (for instance, Working Together to Safeguard Children), by systematically disseminating learning from inspections, audits, and serious case reviews, and by introducing best practice from elsewhere and learning from evaluations of local innovations. For instance, the Signs of Safety approach is being implemented across assessment and safeguarding teams. A further strand will strengthen quality assurance arrangements, including audits and IRO reporting. An audit programme is in place. Additional strands include work to improve commissioning processes, particularly in respect of child placements. A child placement needs assessment has been completed, a child placement strategy is in development, and new panels for Commissioning Placements and Entry to Care are now in place. Although it is too early to assess the impact of these developments, it is worth noting that the rise in numbers of Looked After Children has been halted, with numbers falling from 502 in June 2010 to 489 in December.

- 5.3 Performance improvements were a key feature of the Post-Inspection Action Plan, including a particular focus on timeliness of initial and core assessments. The new Improvement Plan seeks to strengthen the wider performance culture within children's social care whilst retaining focus on specific improvements such as timeliness of assessment. The Improvement Plan has set challenging targets of 90% timeliness for both initial and core assessments. Actual performance during December was 81.4% for initial assessments and 84.2% for core assessments, and the general trajectory for timeliness is one of sustained improvement. Appendix B contains a briefing on timeliness of assessments at the close of 2010/11 quarter three.
- 5.4 The work to improve financial management aims to make managers more proactive and accountable in managing budgets, including staffing budgets. Senior management team meetings now have a greater focus on financial management. A key first step was to take remedial action to ensure a balanced budget for 2010/11, and this has been achieved.
- 5.5 The MTFs (Medium Term Financial Strategy) change programme is the Children and Young People's Service's plan to drive service transformation which will deliver the savings required by the budget reductions being experienced by public services. Specific projects in children's social care include a transformation of management and operational structures, a review of premises with a view to greater co-location with other services, work to improve the commissioning of child placements and better manage the costs associated with these, and contributions a directorate-wide transformation of services for children and young people affected by learning difficulties and disabilities. Much of this work is still in the planning stage, although there has been good progress on the arrangements for commissioning child placements.
- 5.6 The ICS work is now approaching the end of the 'recovery' phase and is moving towards the maintenance of a 'steady state' situation. This is a significant achievement. The system itself is now substantially stable, evidenced by there being no recent reports of lost work. The quality of data held in the system continues to improve, and is now sufficiently robust to allow some additional spreadsheets to be discontinued. In other words, managers and practitioners are increasingly confident that the ICS records are good enough and so there is less need to maintain alternative records. A programme of general ICT skills training for practitioners has led to improved levels of competence and confidence in their use of the system.
- 5.7 The actions in respect of workforce include various measures to recruit, retain, and develop highly skilled workers. This includes proactive management of vacancies to ensure prompt recruitment and the elimination of agency staff apart from in exceptional circumstances. Vacancy rates are currently low and there has been considerable success in recruiting to the additional assessment and safeguarding social worker posts created in response to the 2009 full inspection of safeguarding. This additional capacity is having a positive impact in terms improvements in the quantity and timeliness of assessments being completed by assessment and safeguarding teams.
- 6.0 OFSTED UNANNOUNCED INSPECTION
- 6.1 On Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 January, North Yorkshire experienced its second unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements. Inspectors visited children's social care teams based at Scarborough, Catterick, Selby, and Knaresborough, and conducted telephone interviews with staff in the county council's customer service centre.

6.2 The feedback received at the end of the inspection was positive but is confidential until Ofsted confirm these findings in a formal letter to be published during the second half of February. The local authority expects to receive a draft of this letter during week commencing 31 January.

## 7.0 HEALTH RELATED BEHAVIOUR QUESTIONNAIRE

7.1 During 2010 the Children and Young People Service commissioned the third Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ) for North Yorkshire, carried out by the Schools Health Education Unit at the University of Exeter. The HRBQ is a biennial survey of primary and secondary school pupils in the county. Its findings are an important source of intelligence for strategy development and service planning.

7.2 The 2010 HRBQ includes responses from more than 15,000 pupils taken from Year Groups 2, 6, 8 and 10. The number, age range and geographical coverage of the HRBQ respondents make its findings more robust than those reported by the now discontinued series of Tellus surveys.

7.3 The 2010 HRBQ covers young people's behaviour and attitudes concerning quality of life issues including:

- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Emotional well being
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Safeguarding
- Bullying
- School and homework
- Participation and voice
- Economic well being

7.4 The HRBQ county report has now been finalised, and a copy has been circulated to the Board. For further information please contact Katharine Bruce:  
[Katharine.Bruce@Northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:Katharine.Bruce@Northyorks.gov.uk)

## 8.0 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN HEALTH STRATEGY

8.1 The recommendations arising from the 2009 full inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children included the need to develop and implement a health strategy for looked after children. A health strategy was subsequently developed by NHS North Yorkshire and York and this was approved by the Children's Trust Board in May 2010.

8.2 The Board delegated responsibility for monitoring the delivery of this strategy to the MALAP (Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership), a sub-group of the Board. At a recent meeting of the MALAP colleagues raised concerns about the delivery of the looked after children health strategy. It seems that the delivery of the strategy has lost impetus and visibility amongst health colleagues.

8.3 This apparent stalling of progress on an inspection recommendation, and one which affects a priority vulnerable group of children and young people, is a concern. Colleagues from NHS North Yorkshire and York have since given assurances that this work will be re-energised. The Board is asked to consider its preferred way forward.

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9 December 2010

Miss Cynthia Welbourn  
Corporate Director of Children's Services  
North Yorkshire County Council  
County Hall, Northallerton  
North Yorkshire DL7 8AE

Dear Miss Welbourn

## Annual children's services assessment

Ofsted guidance published in July 2010 explains that the annual assessment of children's services is derived from the performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. This performance profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the local authority has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant indicators in the National Indicator Set (NIS).

In reaching the assessment of children's services, Ofsted has taken account of all inspected and regulated services for children and young people, arrangements for making sure children are safe and stay safe and performance against national measures. More weight has been given to the outcomes of Ofsted's inspections and regulatory visits (Blocks A and B in the performance profile).

The annual assessment derives from a four point scale:

4	Performs excellently	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
3	Performs well	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements
2	Performs adequately	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements
1	Performs poorly	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements

Within each level there will be differing standards of provision. For example, an assessment of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, an assessment of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects. As in 2009, while the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's assessment, meeting or not meeting the minimum requirements alone does not define the grade. The assessment has involved the application of inspector judgement.

## North Yorkshire County Council children's services assessment 2010

<b>Children's services assessment</b>	<b>Performs well (3)</b>
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Children's services in North Yorkshire County Council perform well.

The very large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better. Almost all children's homes are good or better and there is no unsatisfactory provision. Over three quarters of post-16 education providers are good or better with the remainder being satisfactory, a very similar position to that for fostering and adoption services. The large majority of secondary schools are good or better although there is still one school that is inadequate. There is also one inadequate primary school, as opposed to none last year. However, there are now more primary schools that are good or outstanding. Two of the pupil referral units inspected are outstanding.

The unannounced inspection of front line child protection services in 2009 identified two areas for priority action. This was followed by a full announced inspection in which safeguarding services were judged to be adequate and services for looked after children to be good.

National performance indicators show that the very large majority of outcomes are in line with or above the averages for England or for similar areas. The achievement of three- to five-year-olds continues to rise. In national tests, 11-year-olds achieve as well as their counterparts elsewhere but the proportion of 16-year-olds achieving five or more good GCSE passes has risen above the averages in similar areas and nationally. Sixteen-year-olds who receive free schools meals are performing increasingly less well than others of the same age. The number of 16- to 18-year-olds not in education, work or training has fallen and there has been an increase in the proportion of 19-year-olds who have gained qualifications. The rate of re-offending amongst young people is higher than in similar areas. The proportion of young offenders in education, work or training has increased significantly but is still below average.

### Key area for further improvement

- Raise the achievement of 16-year-olds who receive free school meals, so that they perform as well as others of the same age.
- Reduce the rate of re-offending by young people and increase their involvement in education, work or training in line with similar averages.

## Outcomes for children and young people

Local arrangements to encourage children and young people to live healthy lives are very successful. All the special schools, children's homes, private and voluntary fostering and adoption provision are good or very good at this, as are the very large majority of child carers, primary and secondary schools. The local authority's fostering agency and one of the pupil referral units are only satisfactory in this respect. Improvements include: a rise in the take up of schools lunches; a reduction in the number of five- and 11-year-olds who are very overweight; and an increase in the proportion of children and young people who take part in physical activity and sport. However, on the basis of questionnaire returns made by primary carers, the emotional and behavioural health of children in care is below the national average.

A very large majority of settings make a good or better contribution to keeping children and young people safe. In September 2009, inspectors found that safeguarding services were adequate in terms of their overall effectiveness and capacity to improve. Services for looked after children are good in both respects. Inspectors commented on how quickly services had responded to the areas for priority action identified in a previous unannounced inspection. However, they highlighted the need for more consistency in the quality and timeliness of assessments and child protection investigations. They also identified the need to reduce the number of child protection plans lasting more than two years and in the number of children subject to such a plan more than once. However, whilst acknowledging the considerable increase in safeguarding activity overall, there is still some way to go. For example, the most recent figures show that the timeliness of initial assessments continues to be below the national average; there has been little change in the timeliness of core assessments and the timeliness of reviews of children in need has dropped.

The very large majority of settings make good or better provision to help children and young people do well and enjoy their learning. The achievement of three- to five-year-olds continues to rise in line with performance in similar areas. The progress that children make between the ages of seven and 11 is above average in mathematics and in line with similar areas in English. National test results for 11-year-olds remain in line with averages in similar areas. Eleven-year-olds in care achieve as well as their counterparts elsewhere but less well than others of the same age, particularly in mathematics. The proportion of 16-year-olds gaining five or more good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has been above the averages for similar areas for the last four years. The same is true of the numbers gaining two or more good science grades at this level. However, young people receiving free school meals perform less well than other 16-year-olds and the gap between the two groups is widening. Behaviour is good or better in the large majority of secondary schools and, over the last four years, absence rates have fallen in line with those in similar areas.

The high quality of work across institutions, the extensive work of the youth service, the authority's Arts strategy and initiatives such as Play Builder have ensured that the number of young people involved in activities of benefit to themselves and others remains higher than in similar areas. However, the number of young people who say they have been drunk or taken drugs recently has risen. Arrangements for involving young people, including disabled children and those in care, in shaping services are well established and have been further strengthened through the establishment of the North Yorkshire Youth Council. The youth offending service in North Yorkshire works reasonably well but the number of young people who are caught breaking the law more than once is higher than in similar areas. The proportion of young offenders in education, work or training has increased significantly but is still below average.

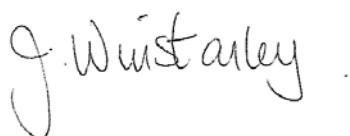
In the large majority of settings, young people receive high levels of support to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to get a job. The number of low-income families who take up their entitlement to childcare so that they can work has risen steadily, in line with the picture in similar areas. The number of care leavers who continue with their education or take up jobs has increased, as has the number of 19-year-olds who have the equivalent of five or more good passes at GCSE. The situation is similar for 19-year-olds with two A levels or the equivalent. The number of 16-year-olds not in education, work or training has fallen when, on average, it has risen in areas of a similar type.

### **Prospects for improvement**

The authority has succeeded in maintaining its good performance. It has established more secure monitoring, management and funding arrangements to help improve the quality of its safeguarding arrangements. It has also provided appropriate support to schools found to be inadequate by Ofsted, in order to help them improve. The review of the Children and Young People's plan is concise and clear and includes a rigorous evaluation of progress, based on a detailed analysis of data and performance information, including feedback from users. The authority has identified the right priorities for development and has drawn up clear plans for building capacity further through 19 specific performance measures and targets which will be monitored in detail.

This children's services assessment is provided in accordance with section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE PERFORMANCE DATA

2010/11 Quarter Three: **Timeliness of Initial and Core Assessments**

INITIAL ASSESSMENTS

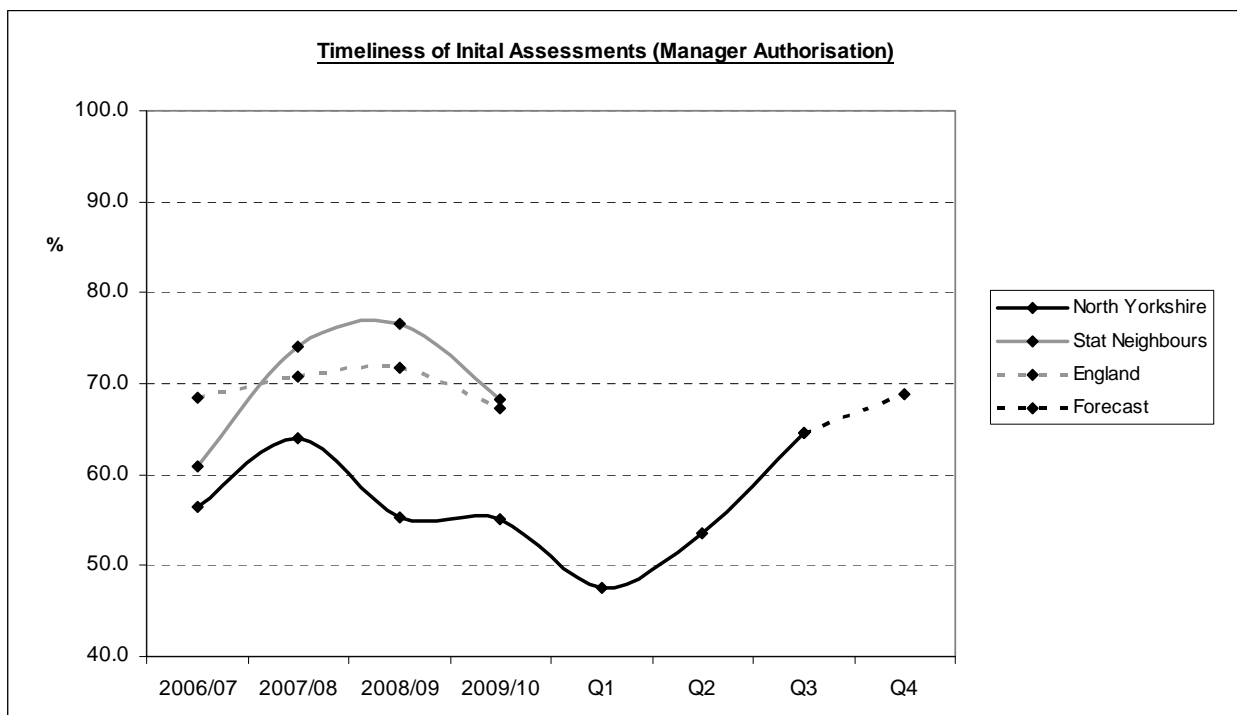
The timeliness of initial assessments has improved during 2010/11 from 47.6% at the end of quarter one to 64.6% at the end of quarter three. This is above the 2009/10 North Yorkshire outturn of 55.1%, but is below the 2009/10 averages for Statistical Neighbours (68.2%) and England (67.3%).

2559 initial assessments were completed during the first three quarters of 2010/11, an increase from 2466 during the same period in 2009/10.

Compared to 2009/10, current performance would place North Yorkshire seventh out of eleven statistical neighbours and in the bottom quartile for all authorities. Note, however, that North Yorkshire's direction of travel is one of improvement, whereas the most recent averages for Statistical Neighbours and England show a downward trajectory.

The monthly timeliness figure for December was 81.4%. If this level of performance is repeated throughout quarter four, the forecast outturn for 2010/11 would be 68.8%. This would be the best outturn figure ever achieved by North Yorkshire for this indicator: to date the best figure was 64.0% achieved in 2007/08.

Timeliness of Initial Assessments (%)	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 (cumulative)			
					Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 Forecast
North Yorkshire	56.4	64.0	55.2	55.1	47.6	53.6	64.6	68.8
Stat Neighbours	60.9	74.0	76.6	68.2				
England	68.4	70.7	71.8	67.3				



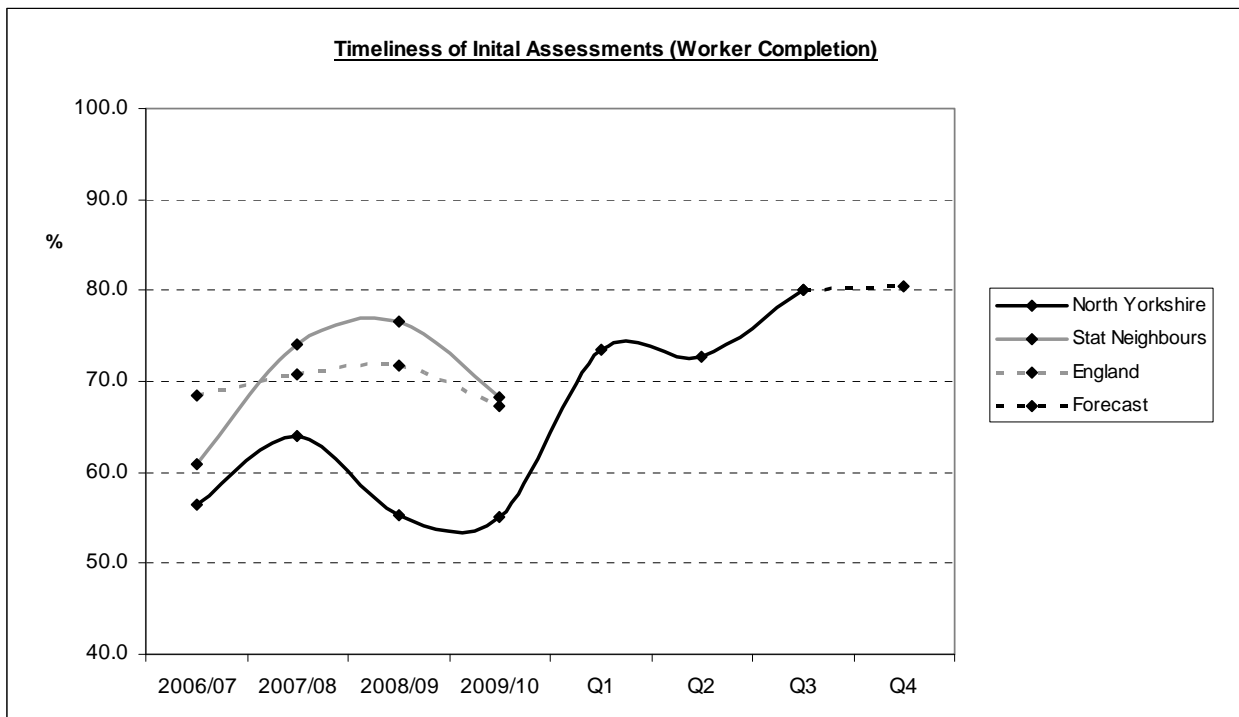
Note: Manager Authorisation versus Worker Completion

The 2010/11 North Yorkshire performance reported on the previous page takes ‘manager authorisation’ as the point at which an initial assessment is deemed to be complete. The counting rules for the timeliness of initial assessments have changed recently. Previously, North Yorkshire reported timeliness of initial assessments in respect of ‘worker completion’ (the point at which a social worker completes an assessment and submits it to their manager for authorisation). From 2010/11 onwards, in line with national guidance, North Yorkshire is reporting timeliness in respect of ‘manager authorisation’ (the point at which the manager gives authorisation that the assessment has been completed to the required standard).

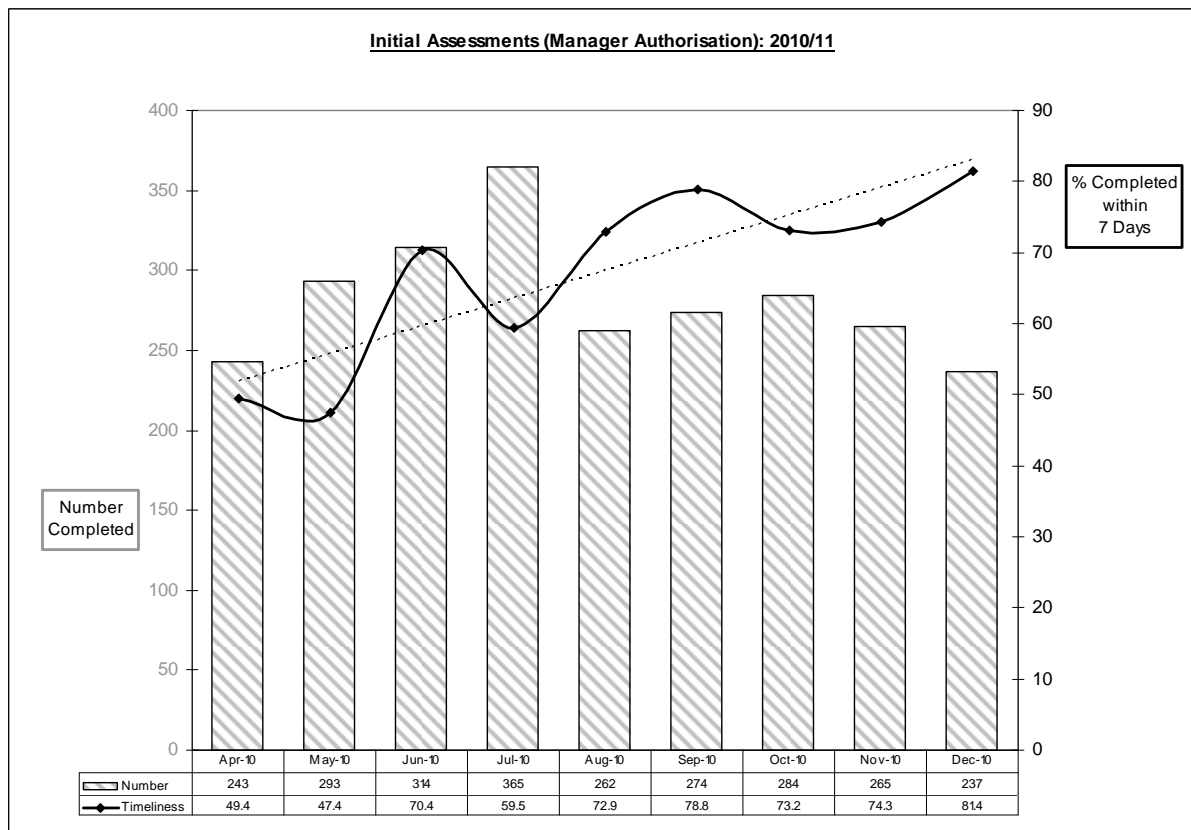
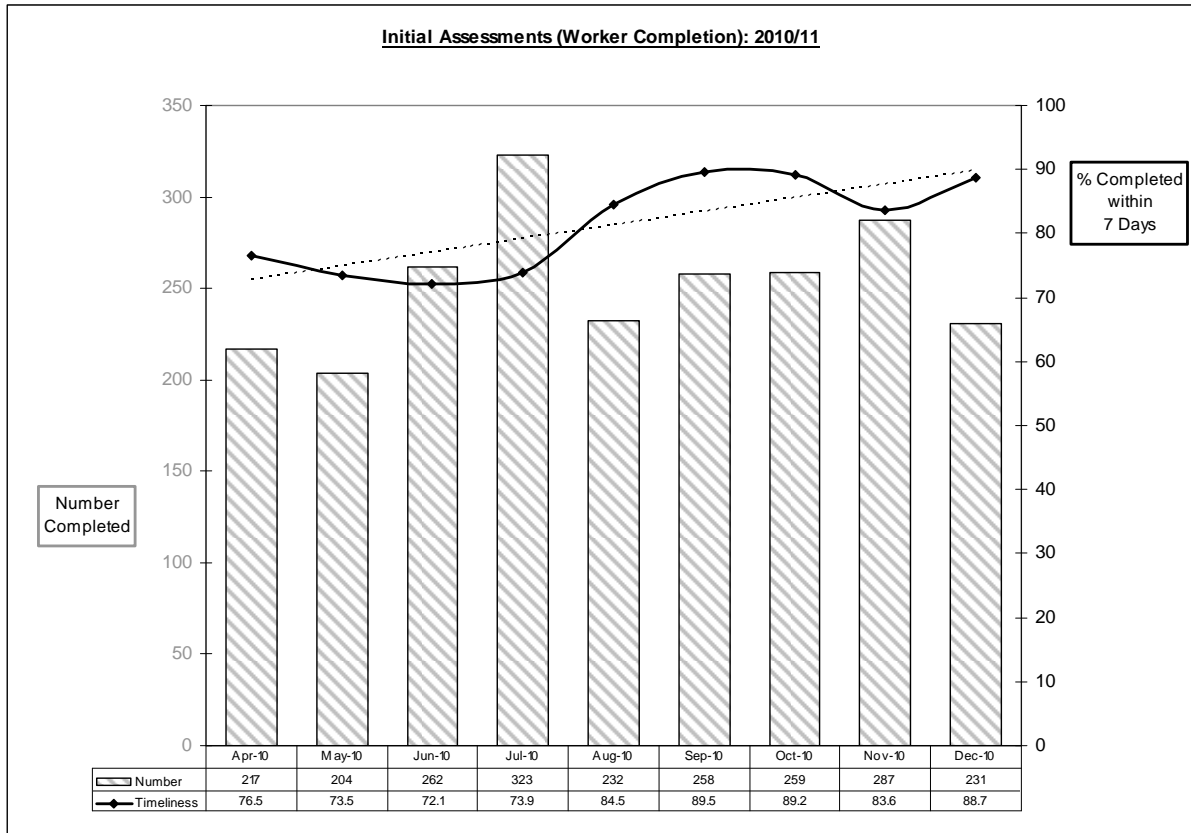
This change in counting methodology means that comparisons with previous years are problematic: the analysis on the previous page compares manager authorisations in 2010/11 with worker completions in previous years. A better comparison with previous years is gained by looking at the performance data for worker completion. This shows a striking improvement in North Yorkshire’s performance, with 80.1% of initial assessments completed in a timely manner at the close of quarter three.

Worker Completion:

Timeliness of Initial Assessments (%)	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 (cumulative)			
					Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 Forecast
North Yorkshire	56.4	64.0	55.2	55.1	73.5	72.7	80.1	80.4
Stat Neighbours	60.9	74.0	76.6	68.2				
England	68.4	70.7	71.8	67.3				



The following charts show the 2010/11 monthly initial assessment timeliness figures for both worker completions and manager authorisations. The dotted line demonstrates the improvement trend.



## CORE ASSESSMENTS

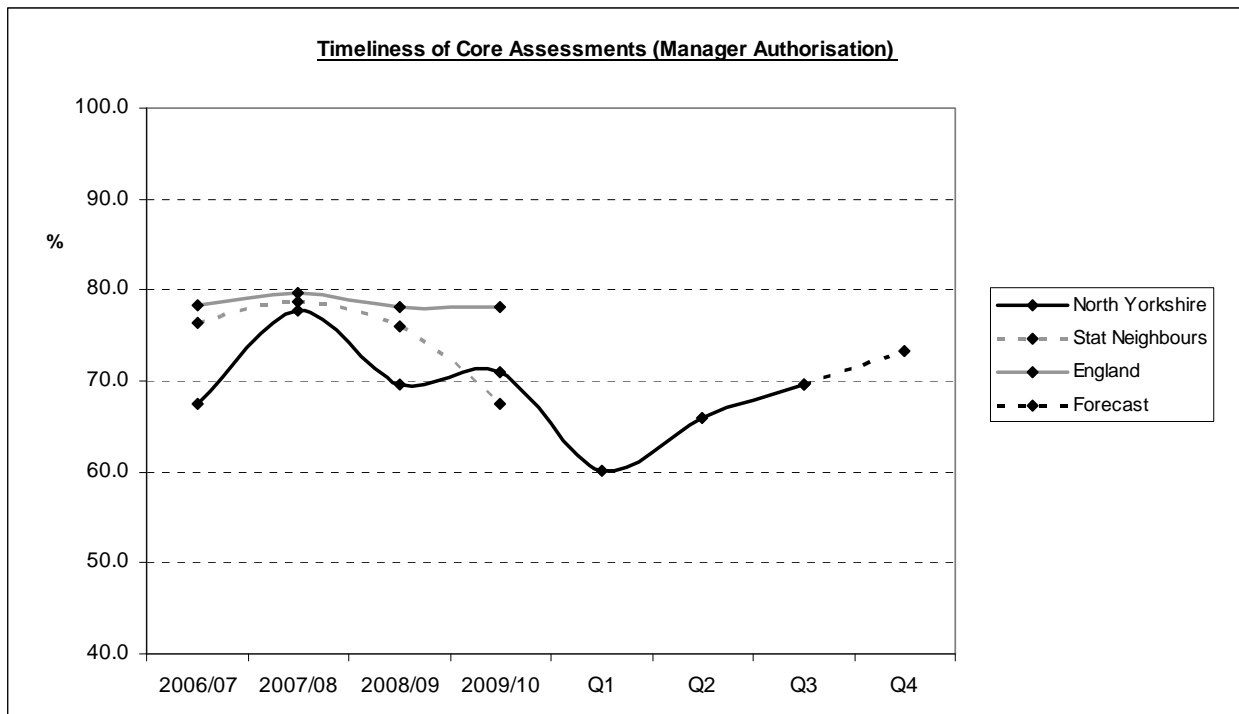
The timeliness of core assessments has improved from 60.1% at the end of quarter one to 69.7% at the end of quarter three. This is below the North Yorkshire 2009/10 outturn of 71.0%. It is above the 2009/10 average for Statistical Neighbours (67.5%) but is below the average for England (78.1%).

1287 core assessments were completed during the first three quarters of 2010/11, an increase from 689 during the same period in 2009/10.

Compared to 2009/10, current performance would place North Yorkshire eighth out of eleven statistical neighbours and in the bottom quartile for all authorities. Note, however, that North Yorkshire's direction of travel is one of steady improvement, whereas the most recent Statistical Neighbour average shows a downward trajectory and the England average is relatively static.

The monthly timeliness figure for December was 81.4%. If this level of performance is repeated throughout quarter four, the forecast outturn for 2010/11 would be 73.3%.

Timeliness of Core Assessments (%)	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 (cumulative)			
					Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 Forecast
North Yorkshire	67.4	77.8	69.7	71.0	60.1	66.0	69.7	73.3
Stat Neighbours	76.4	78.8	76.0	67.5				
England	78.4	79.6	78.2	78.1				



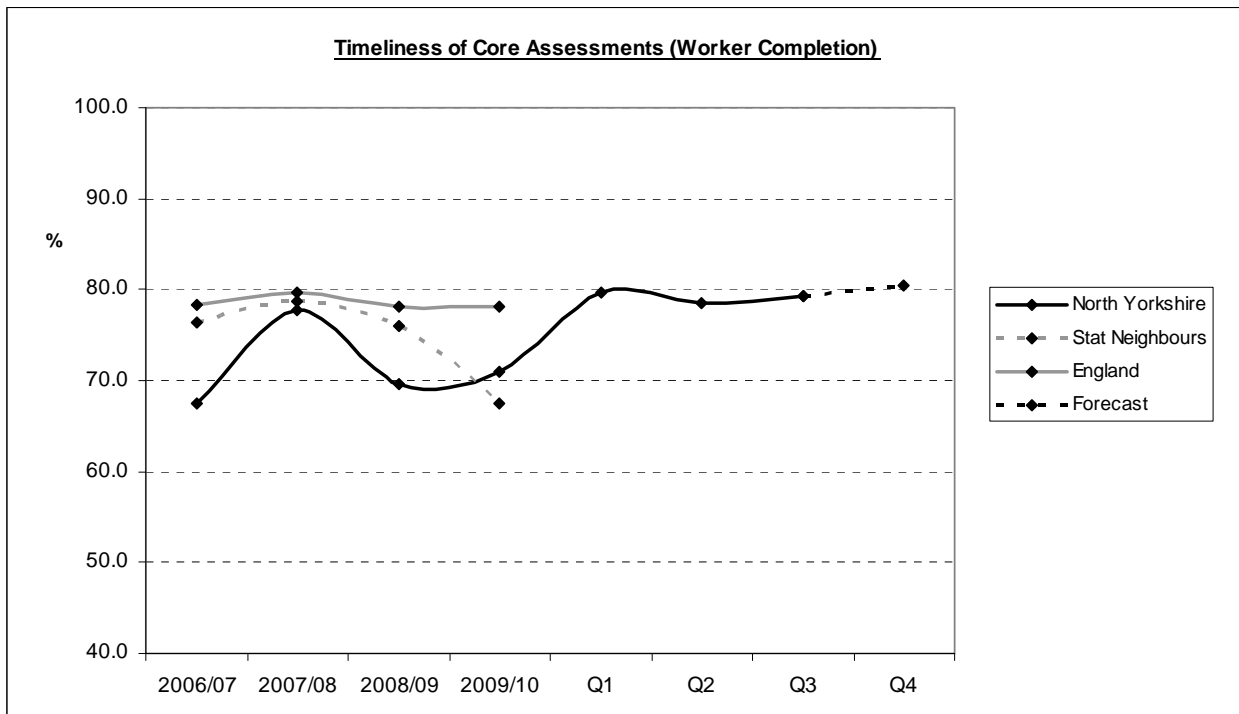
Note: Manager Authorisation versus Worker Completion

As with initial assessments, the counting rules for the timeliness of core assessments have changed recently. Previously, North Yorkshire reported timeliness of core assessments in respect of 'worker completion'. From 2010/11 onwards, in line with national guidance, North Yorkshire is reporting timeliness in respect of 'manager authorisation'.

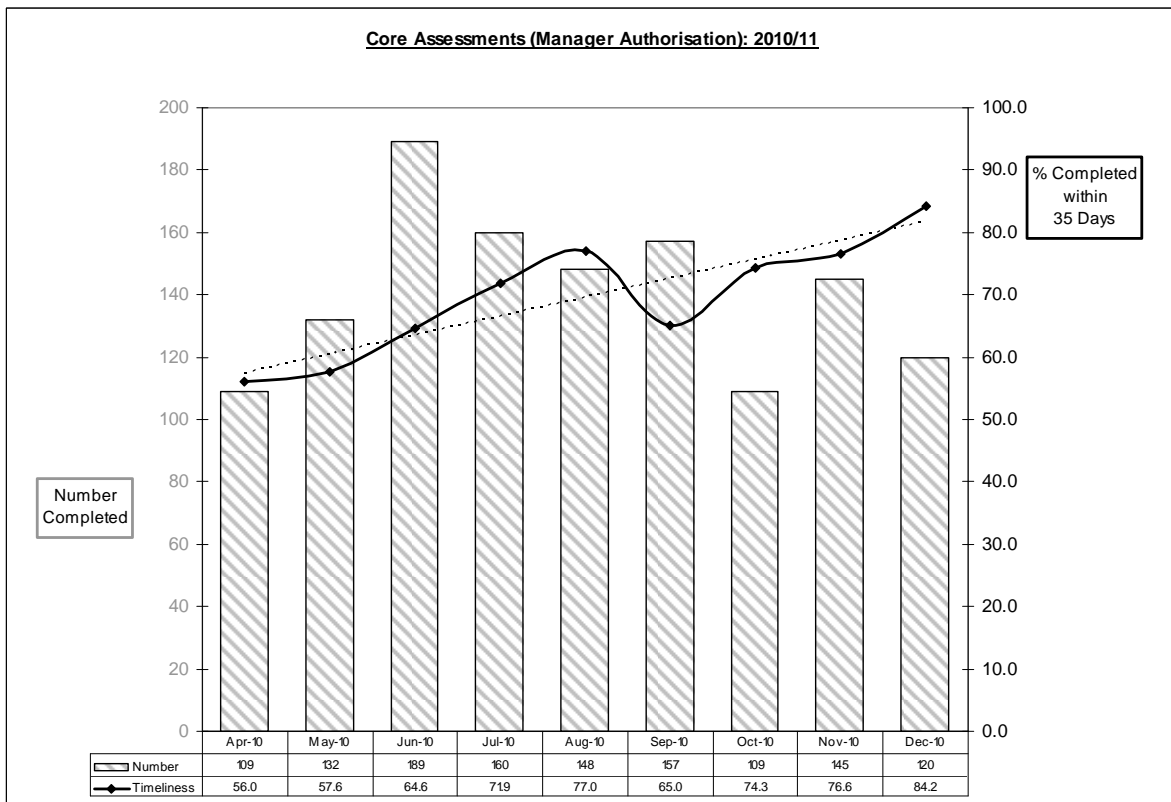
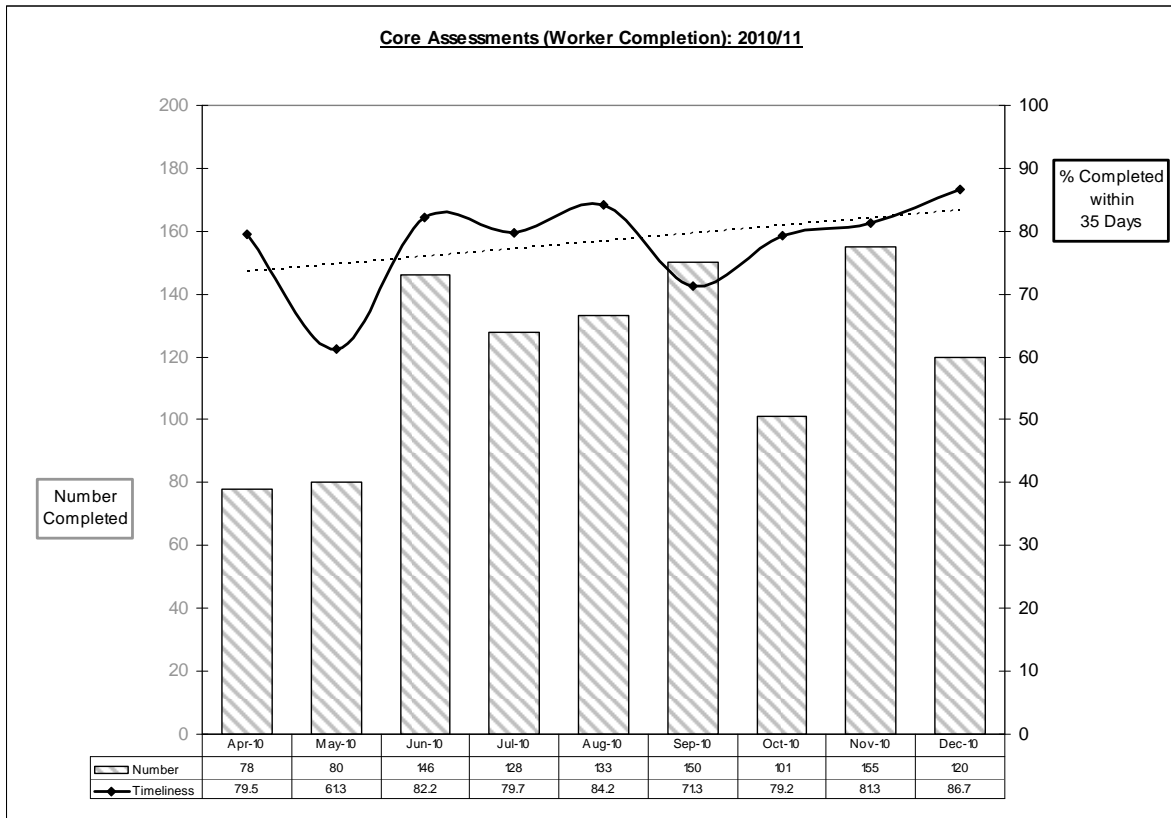
This change in counting methodology means that comparisons with previous years are problematic: the analysis on the previous page compares manager authorisations in 2010/11 with worker completions in previous years. A better comparison with previous years is gained by looking at the performance data for worker completion. This shows a strong and sustained improvement in North Yorkshire's performance, with 79.2% of core assessments completed in a timely manner at the close of quarter three.

Worker Completion:

Timeliness of Core Assessments (%)	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11			
					Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 Forecast
North Yorkshire	67.4	77.8	69.7	71.0	79.6	78.5	79.2	80.5
Stat Neighbours	76.4	78.8	76.0	67.5				
England	78.4	79.6	78.2	78.1				



The following charts show the 2010/11 monthly core assessment timeliness figures for both worker completions and manager authorisations. The dotted line demonstrates the improvement trend.



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