

2024/25 ANNUAL REPORT

TREES Team

(Child exploitation and missing children)

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Staffing position

TREES:

CE and Missing Operational Lead
CE and Missing Co-ordinator
CE and Missing Business Support (Part time – 22.20 hours)
3 full time Family Support Workers
1 Exploitation Senior Social Worker
2 Exploitation Social Workers
Young Person's Substance Advisor

There are no current vacancies within the TREES team, and all positions are permanently recruited to.

Exploitation:

Overview of developments of Exploitation Responses:

January 2020 – regrade of the Exploitation Operational Lead post to Team Manager (in view of additional responsibilities and increase in work volume since launch of the exploitation pathway in Sept 2019).

November 2020 – Exploitation Social Worker seconded from mainstream children's social care team, this position became permanent and uplifted to Senior Social Worker as part of the **April 2021** growth.

March 2021 – 2 x 22.2-hour Family Support Workers (FSW) and 1 x 22.2 business admin – because of funding transferred from an early help (vacancy) in order to take on additional responsibilities around return home interviews, (children who go missing from home/care), and bespoke exploitation direct support work.

September 2021 – growth agreed to increase FSW to 3 x full time, additional 2 social workers and 1 x young person's substance misuse worker

2022 – TREES now produces a quarterly newsletter which is widely distributed across the partnership. This has been highly acclaimed to be one of the best in the country by the National Working Group (NWG).

2023 – TREES were awarded the Directors Recognition Award at the Annual Staff Awards Event

July 2025 – Shropshire win a Home Office BID to pilot our own National Referral Mechanism (NRM) devolved decision making panel.

Shropshire's response to exploitation and missing children is briefly outlined as follows:

- **Child Exploitation and Missing Power BI reports** are maintained; this enables us to capture key information that informs the profile of Shropshire's missing and exploited children, helps to target services and consider disruption across the county.
- **Exploitation triage** is held twice weekly in Compass, led by Clare Jervis (CE and Missing Operational Lead), the meeting includes colleagues from Police, Education, Health, YJS, Targeted Early Help Lead, Drug and Alcohol Services (We Are With You), Children's Society (CLIMB) and Branch Project. Triage will consider all new exploitation risk assessments, review risk assessments and police intelligence, assessment/judgement of risk is formed and actions agreed across the partnership.
- **Child Exploitation (CE) Panel** – held monthly, chaired by Jeanette Hill (Strategic Lead for CE and Missing Children), very well attended, looks at the profile of exploitation and missing across Shropshire, identifies actions across the partnership in regard to disruption and support, and considers all children identified as being at high risk of exploitation. A monthly report is prepared by Clare Jervis Team Manager, which covers all new referrals over the month, and any patterns and trends that are formulating.
- **Locality Meetings** – held across the county as and when required, convened in response to localised concerns around exploitation and held in areas of low referrals. Involves all key partnerships.
- **Mapping meetings** – held as and when the need is identified through either strategy meetings or case planning meetings and looks at specific children where exploitation is a feature, with the aim of identify associates and links where actions can be taken to reduce risk and keep a child safe.
- **Disruption meetings** - held county wide, led by Clare Jervis, targets and focused on multi agency response to concerns of exploitation and how these can be disrupted.
- **Children exiting gangs protocol** - held under s.47 of the Children Act 1989 – child protection response, consider risks when a young person is voicing they wish to exit/leave the gang, as this will increase risk to young person, their family and connections, so careful considerations needs to be given.
- **Professional consultations** – monthly consultations offered to all practitioners working with young person who want to discuss/reflect on concerns – consultation panel held by Children's Social Care (CSC), We Are With You, Targeted Early Help.
- **SSCP Tackling Exploitation Meeting** – led by Shropshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership, (SSCP), and chaired by Police, considers exploitation for both children and adults at a strategic level.
- **Missing Intervention Meetings** – held about children who have been reported missing 3 times in a 90 day period, ensuring an appropriate missing trigger plan is formulated to reduce the risk of child going missing again – looking at push and pull factors to reduce risks.

Data:

Exploitation

Q1

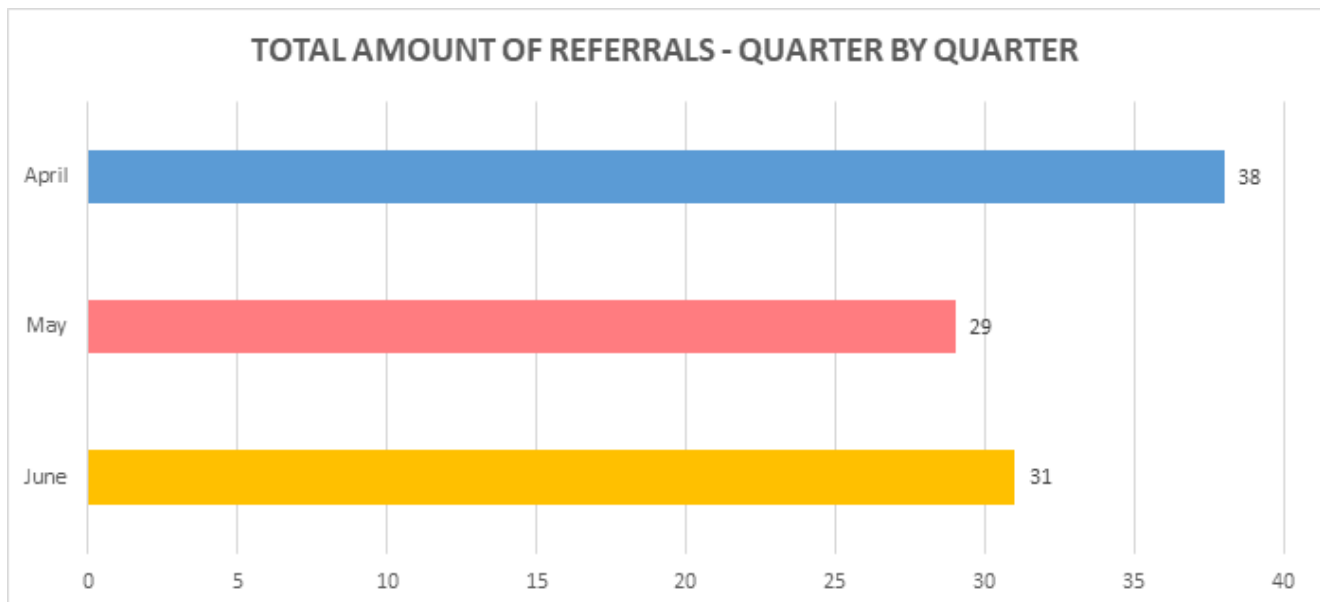
April 2024 – June 2024

Total Amount of Referrals

Total amount of referrals this quarter: 98

Type of Referrals

New referrals:	38
Re-referrals:	19
Reviews:	41



Q2

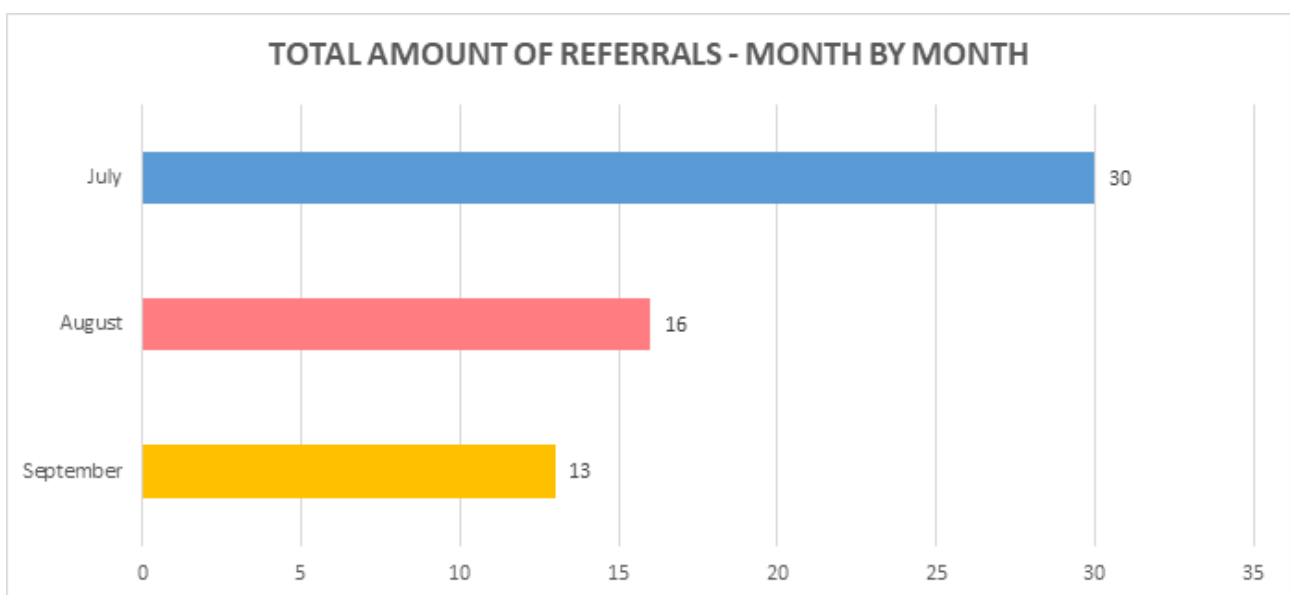
July – September 2024

Total Amount of Referrals

Total amount of referrals this quarter: 59

Type of Referrals

New referrals:	30
Re-referrals:	12
Reviews:	17



Q3

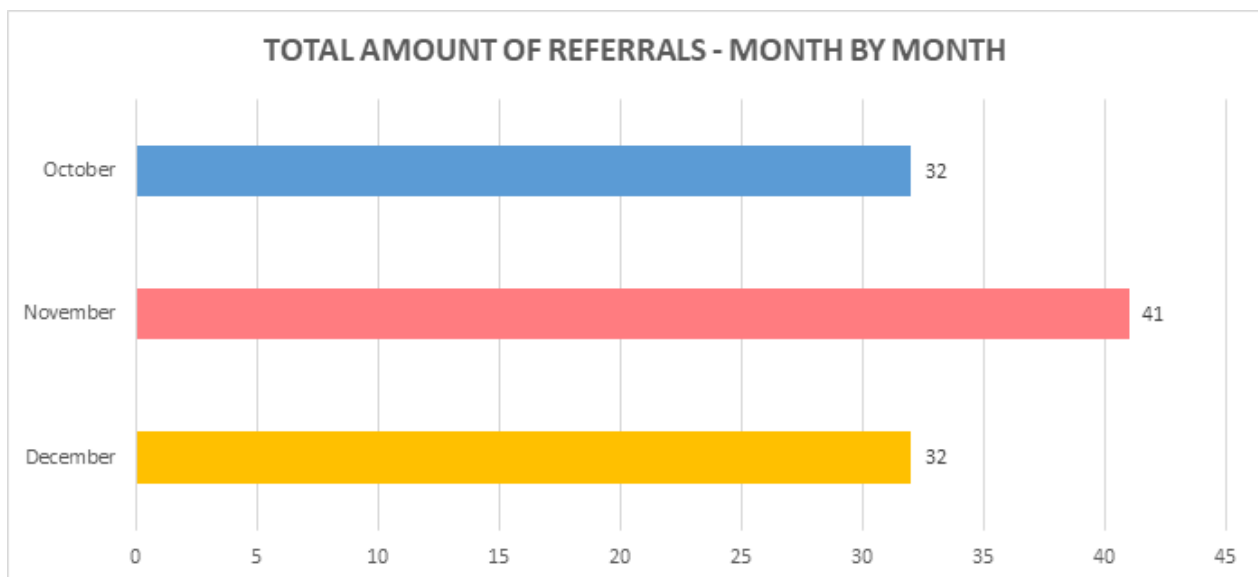
October – December 2024

Total Amount of Referrals

Total amount of referrals this quarter: 105

Type of Referrals

New referrals:	52
Re-referrals:	17
Reviews:	36



Q4

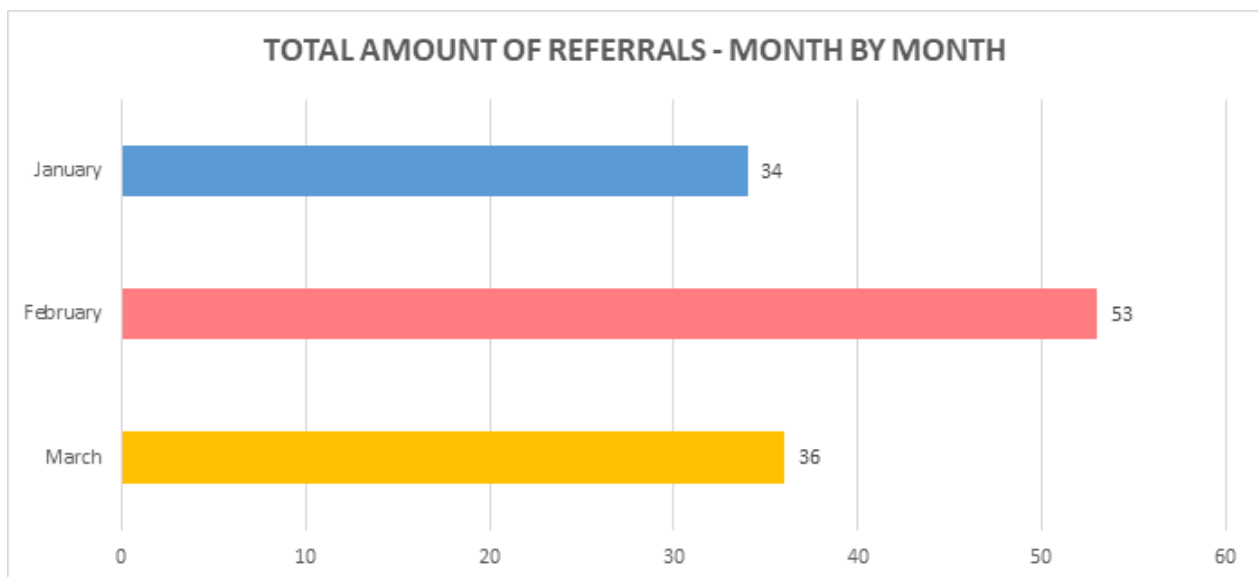
January 2025 – March 2025

Total Amount of Referrals

Total amount of referrals this quarter: 123

Type of Referrals

New referrals:	64
Re-referrals:	26
Reviews:	33



Missing children (from home and from care):

Q1

April 2024 – June 2024

Total missing episodes: 77 (not including OLA children)

Total number of children who went missing: 42

Gender

Male: 18

Female: 24

Return Home Interviews

Q1

CLA Return Home Interviews

Completed RHIs: 44

Declined RHIs: 20

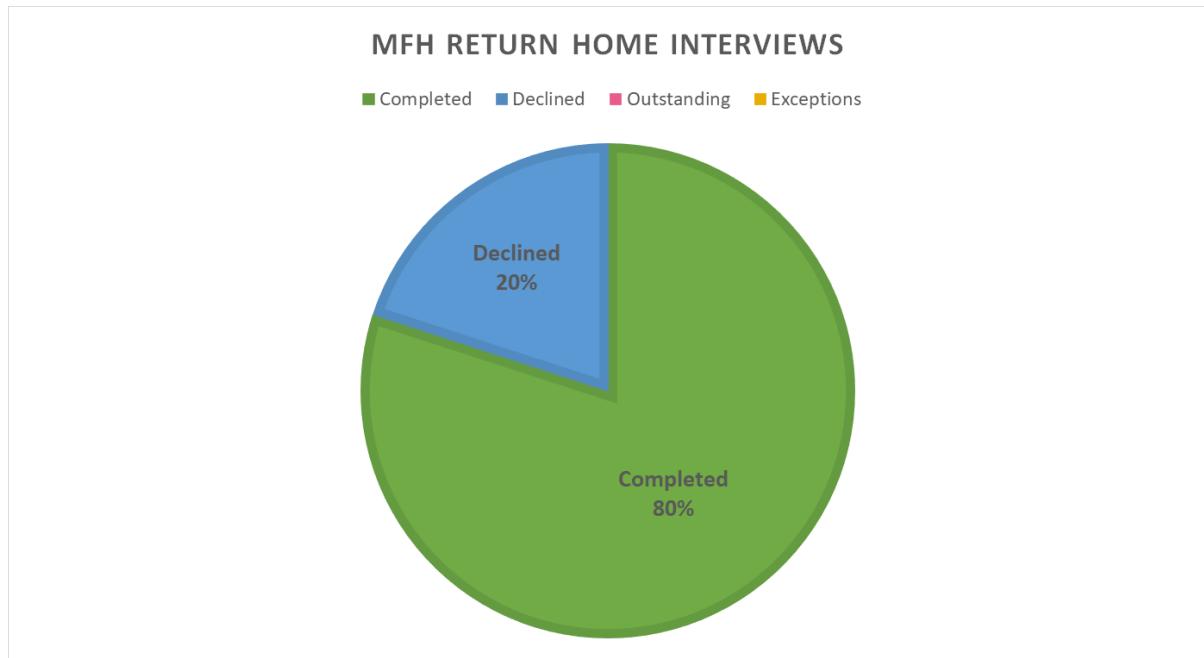
Outstanding RHIs: 0

Exceptions: 0



MFH Return Home Interviews (total episodes for Shropshire children missing from home: 33)

Completed RHIs:	24	Outstanding RHIs:	2
Declined RHIs:	7 (1 by parents)	Exceptions:	0



Q2

July – September 2024

Total missing episodes this financial year (not including OLA children): 63

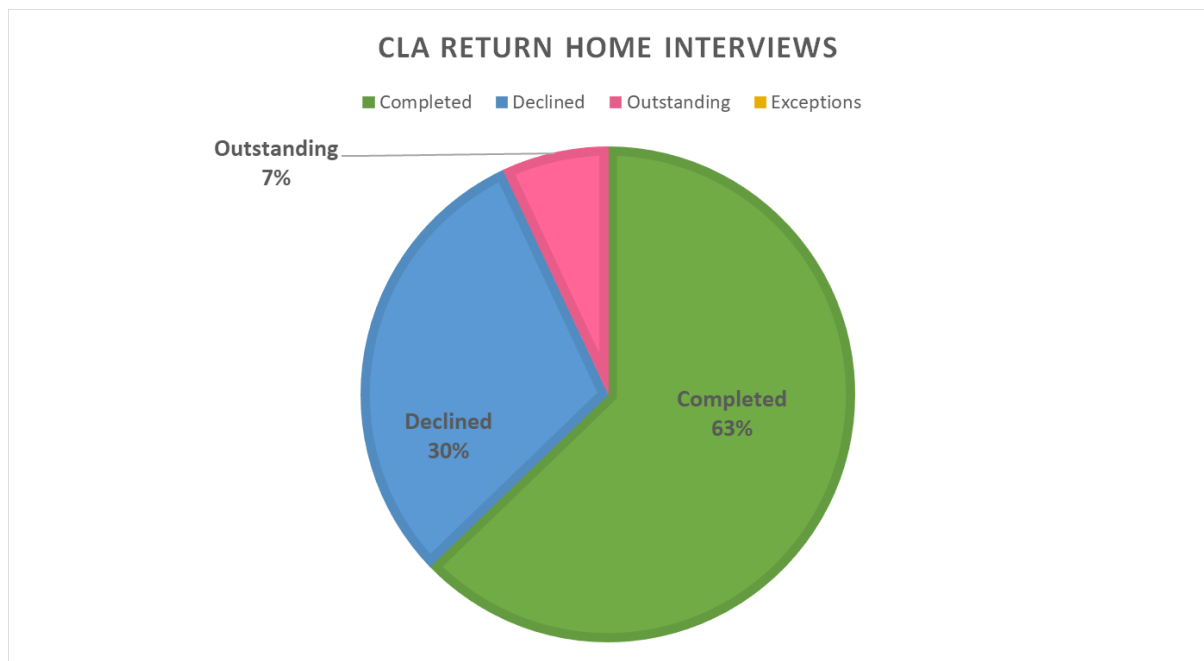
Total number of children who went missing: 43

Gender

Male:	20
Female:	23

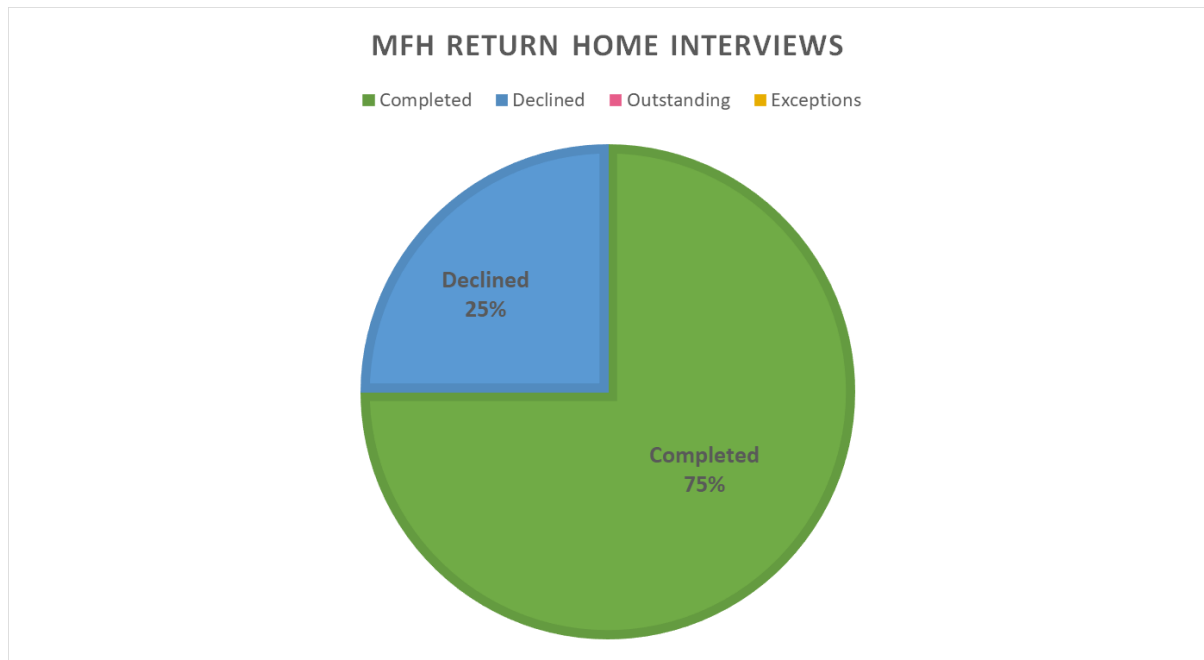
CLA Return Home Interviews (total episodes for Shropshire children missing from their placement: 43)

Completed RHIs:	27	Outstanding RHIs:	3
Declined RHIs:	13	Exceptions:	0



MFH Return Home Interviews (total episodes for Shropshire children missing from home: 20)

Completed RHIs:	15	Outstanding RHIs:	0
Declined RHIs:	5	Exceptions:	0



Q3

October – December 2024

Total Amount of Missing Episodes

Total amount of missing episodes this month (not including OLA children): 90

Total number of children who went missing: 50

Gender

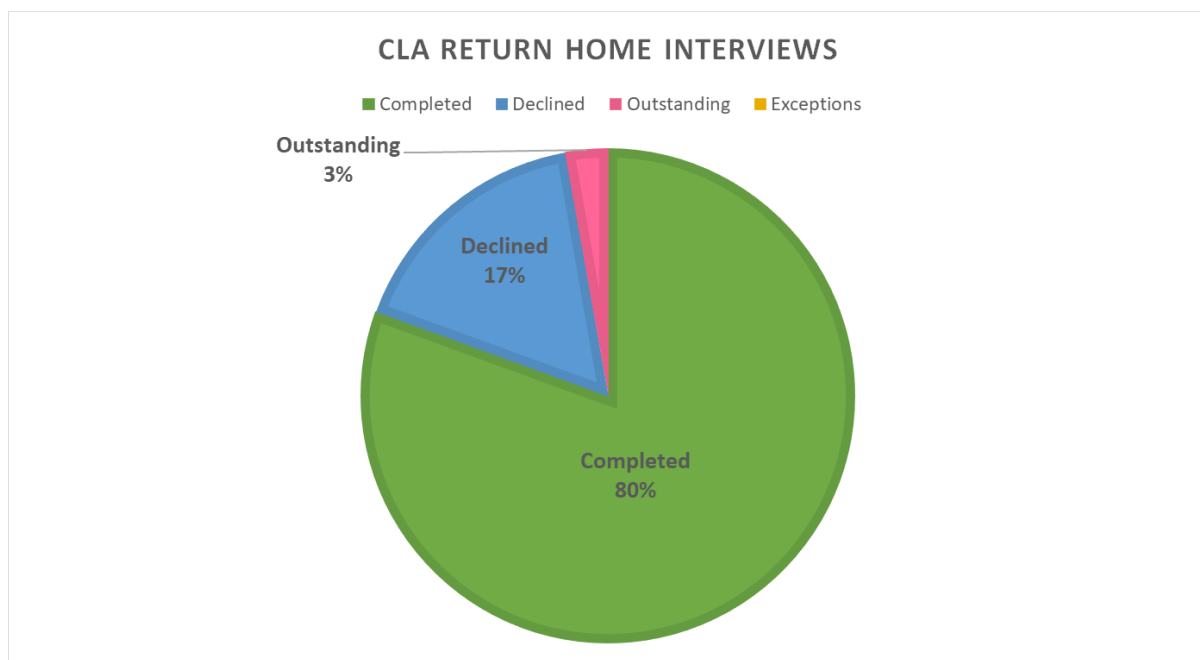
Male: 25

Female: 25

CLA Return Home Interviews

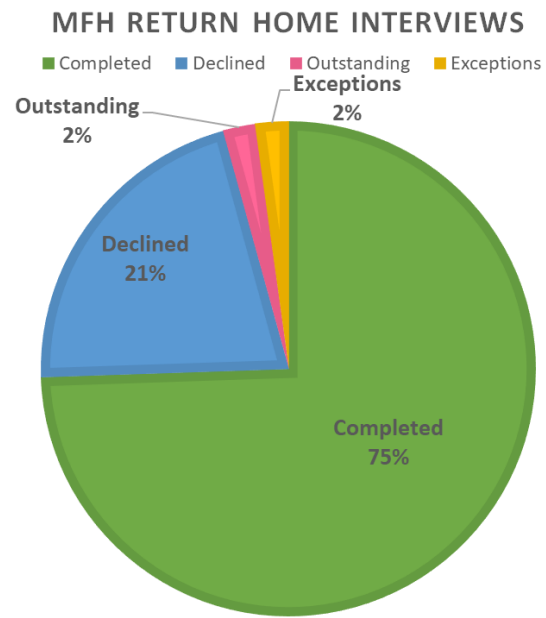
Completed: 27 (18 in timescale) Exceptions: 0

Declined: 15 Outstanding: 1



MFH Return Home Interviews

Completed:	39 (24 within timescale)	Exceptions:	2
Declined:	4	Outstanding:	1
Declined by parents:	1		



Q4**January – March 2024****Total Amount of Missing Episodes**

Total amount of missing episodes this month (not including OLA children): 83

Total number of children who went missing: 53

Gender

Male: 34

Female: 19

CLA Return Home Interviews (total episodes for Shropshire children missing from their placement: 36)

Completed RHIs:	29	Outstanding RHIs:	1
Declined RHIs:	6	Exceptions:	0

MFH Return Home Interviews (total episodes for Shropshire children missing from home: 47)

Completed RHIs:	35	Outstanding RHIs:	1
Declined RHIs:	10 (4 by parents)	Exceptions:	1

Overall Analysis

In brief during the year of 2024 and 2025, we have received a total of 385 risk assessments all of which have gone through our triage process, this is an increase of 4.6% on the previous year where we received 368 risk assessments in total. These risk assessments are made up from new referrals (84), re-referrals (74) and review of existing risk assessments (127). Quarter 4 (Jan – March 25) was the busiest in terms of most numbers of new referrals received at 64.

Breakdown of types of exploitation:

Q1

Type of Exploitation (number includes 18 cases where both CSE & CCE are occurring)

Number of CSE referrals: 43

Number of CCE referrals: 73

Q2

Type of Exploitation (number includes 10 cases where both CSE & CCE are occurring)

Number of CSE referrals: 26

Number of CCE referrals: 43

Q3

Type of Exploitation (number includes 27 cases where both CSE & CCE are occurring)

Number of CSE referrals: 44

Number of CCE referrals: 88

Q4

Type of Exploitation (number includes 25 cases where both CSE & CCE are occurring)

Number of CSE referrals: 45

Number of CCE referrals: 103

We can see from the above data that Child Criminal Exploitation is the prevalent risk within Shropshire with 307 children identified within this risk category, this makes up 66% of the total number.

In regard to gender: Males account for the biggest proportion at 223 compared to 162 females, quarterly breakdown as follows:

Q1

Male:	55
Female:	43

Q2

Male:	32
Female:	27

Q3

Male:	59
Female:	46

Q4

Male:	77
Female:	46

The TREES team has continued throughout the year to address exploitation within the county, work in partnership with multi agencies and support young people as appropriate. A brief breakdown of their work has included:

Quarter 1:

George Davies & Clare Jervis completed an internal audit of the Substance misuse pathway.

Method; random dip samples of YPs and professionals attending the weekly consultations.

Findings - to be improved.

- Professionals taking too long to complete action to refer to WAWY.
- Missed opportunities when referring early on
- When referred cannot see attached form so hard to track open cases.

Findings - positive.

- Timely and thorough response from WAWY when referred, good outcomes when working with WAWY.

- Pathway followed in every sample and WAWY action recommended consistently.
- No evidence of SMA involvement until meet & greet completed/WAWY offered in first instance.

Recommendations:

- Possible implementation of substance misuse 'flag' on LCS/EHM for ongoing SM issues to be reviewed quarterly and track open SM cases.
- Where substance misuse is identified early – invite to consultation.
- Ensuring pathway is utilised sooner to avoid 'drift and delay' to the young people and prevent further CE escalation.
- Be more specific around standardising WAWY referrals are completed whenever a SM issue is mentioned.
- Recommend SMART implementation during consultation process to action targets in a timely way.
- WAWY attendance consultations could improve referrals – potential for Sonya Jones Service Manager WAWY to visit End to End, have a clear voice to senior managers by the time they get to consultation there are missed opportunities.
- To address the delay between consultation and WAWY referral - create form for LCS for Smarter Screening tool to reduce delay between referrals.

Quarter 2:

This quarter, the TREES Exploitation and Missing Team focused on several key areas to address child exploitation and missing children. Their efforts included:

Early Identification and Intervention: The team worked on identifying children at risk of exploitation early and intervening to prevent risks from escalating. This involved close collaboration with social workers, family support workers, and schools to ensure timely referrals and support.

Multi-Agency Collaboration: The team emphasized the importance of multi-agency collaboration, working closely with social care, police, educational institutions, and health services. This collaboration was crucial in providing comprehensive support to vulnerable children and addressing the complex nature of exploitation.

Disruption Activities: The team conducted disruption activities in high-risk areas identified as hot spots for exploitation. This included executing warrants at local businesses involved in illegal activities, such as selling vapes and alcohol to young people, and addressing concerns about unexplained money transfers linked to drug-related activities.

Support for High-Risk Children: The team provided targeted support to high-risk children, including those with multiple missing episodes and those involved in criminal activities. This support included harm reduction work, counselling services, and educational re-engagement programs.

Addressing Substance Misuse: The team addressed the high levels of substance misuse among exploited children, providing education and support to reduce the risks associated with drug and alcohol use. They worked with substance misuse advisors to gather information on local trends and provide targeted interventions.

Community Engagement: The team engaged with the community to raise awareness about the risks of exploitation and the importance of early intervention. This included working with local businesses, community groups, and parents to identify and address potential risks.

Data Analysis and Reporting: The team analysed data from referrals and missing episodes to identify patterns and trends. This analysis helped inform their strategies and interventions, ensuring that resources were targeted effectively to address the most pressing issues.

Overall, the TREES Exploitation and Missing Team's work this quarter focused on early identification, multi-agency collaboration, disruption activities, targeted support for high-risk children, addressing substance misuse, community engagement, and data analysis. Their efforts aimed to provide comprehensive support to vulnerable children and address the complex and multifaceted nature of child exploitation.

Quarter 3:

Children whose risk levels have reduced.

Out of the 43 children reviewed over the three months, we have seen a total of 22 children's exploitation risk levels reduce from medium risk to Low risk. Additionally, 2 children's risk levels reduced from High risk to Low risk.

- **Positive Changes:** 29 young people's plans/interventions have affected positive change, reducing their risk levels.
- **Re-engagement with Education:** 6 children are reported to have re-engaged back into education, including alternative education and higher education.
- **Improved Relationships:** 4 young people's relationships with their parents/carers have improved.

Analysis of where plans have been successful: The decrease in risk for certain young people can be attributed to several key factors and interventions, including the intense support offered by family support workers within the TREES team. The use of CE pathway tools and assessments ensured that risks were identified and responded to promptly, helping to mitigate risks before they escalated. Completing the national referral mechanism in a timely manner and responding quickly once a conclusive grounds decision was made ensured that appropriate actions were taken without delay. Regular updates to the Single Competency Agency (SCA) assisted in their decision-making process, ensuring they had the most current information to act upon. High-risk children being presented at panel ensured that their cases received the necessary attention and scrutiny, leading to more targeted interventions.

Ensuring that the child's voice was evident through each agency case file meant that the young people's perspectives and needs were considered in all decisions and actions taken. Regular updates to and involvement of the British Transport Police (BTP) in strategy meetings where necessary helped in addressing risks related to transportation and movement, which are critical in cases of exploitation. Reviewing the CE risk assessment tool every three months or sooner if risks increased ensured that any changes in the young person's situation were promptly addressed.

Outstanding evidence of multi-agency working, with clear evidence that CE risks were being routinely scrutinized, highlighted the collaborative efforts in addressing exploitation. Clear evidence that CE triage recommendations were followed up with SMART actions and recommendations to disrupt exploitation concerns ensured that the interventions were specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

Holding mapping meetings in a timely way and ensuring key professionals attended helped in coordinating efforts and sharing information, which was crucial in addressing and reducing risks. Family support workers within the TREES team played a significant role in reducing risks by supporting school attendance, engaging in harm reduction work, and providing consistent and reliable support, which helped in building trust and stability for the young people.

Quarter 4:

Children Whose Risk Levels Have Reduced

During Q4 2024-25, several children's exploitation risk levels were reduced. In January, 6 children's risk levels reduced from medium to low risk. Positive engagement with the TREES team, re-engagement in education, and improved

relationships with parents/carers contributed to this reduction. In February, 3 children's risk levels reduced from medium to low risk. The TREES team worked on re-engaging young people in education and improving relationships with parents/carers. In March, 2 children's risk levels reduced, with re-engagement in education, harm reduction work, and improved relationships with parents/carers.

Children Whose Risk Levels Have Increased

During Q4 2024-25, there were a few cases where children's risk levels increased. In January, 1 child's risk level increased from low to medium risk, and 1 child's risk level increased from medium to high risk. Concerns included ongoing missing episodes, police protection, and familial influences. In February and March, there were no cases where children's risk levels increased.

Annual Report prepared by:

Jeanette Hill

Service Manager

Compass, Assessment Teams, TREES and EHA

13th October 2025