

# Quicker Processes = Better Outcomes

## Reducing drift and delay in permanence planning for looked after children

Kirsty Doull, Permanence Consultant, Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS)

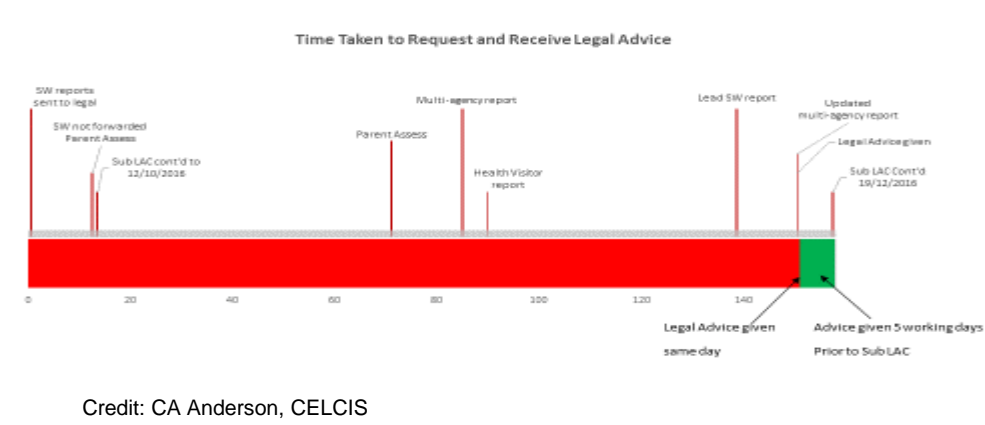
I felt like I was in a queuing system – and that I was pushed to the back of the queue every time  
Looked After Young Person

Every child deserves a permanent and loving home to grow up in. For looked after children, the processes required to get them to such a home can be too lengthy. Delays in securing a stable home can be very upsetting for children and can lead to negative outcomes in later life. Reducing such delays gives children the opportunity to thrive and achieve their potential in a permanent and loving home as quickly as possible.

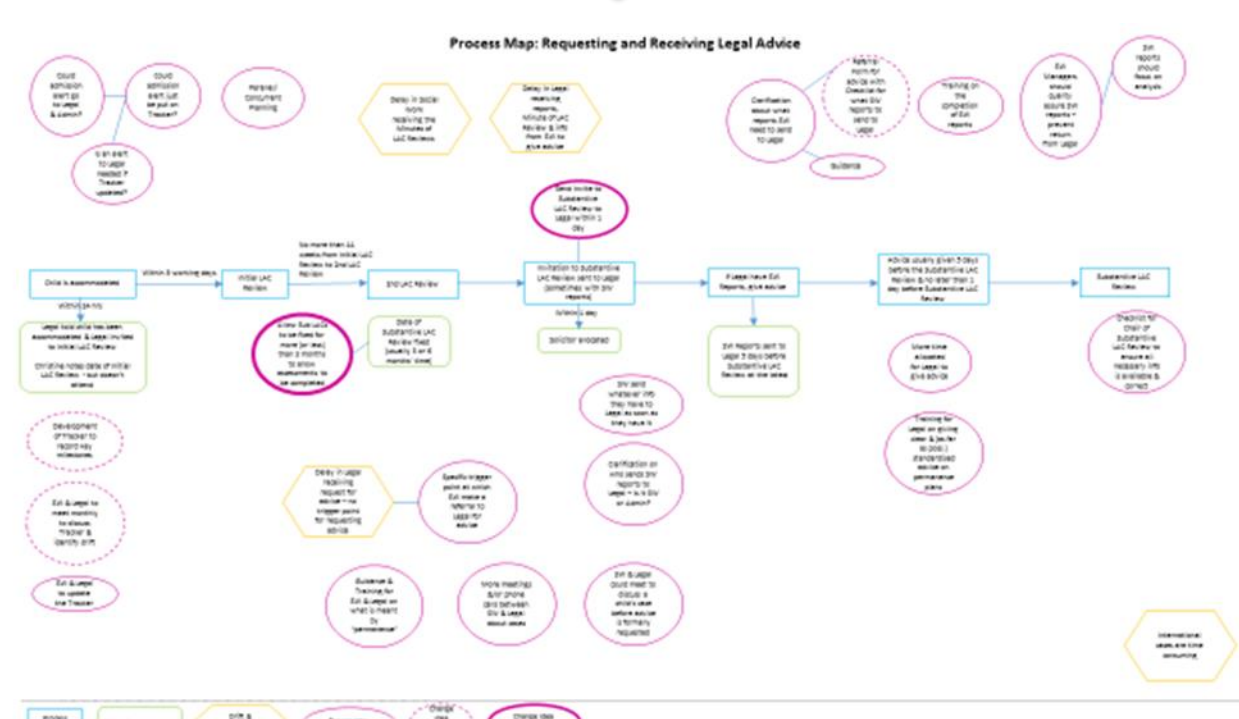
**AIM:** By end of August 2018, in 50% of children's cases, Social Work will send Legal all the information required to give legal advice on a child's permanence plan at least 8 full working days before the date of the Substantive Looked After Child Review that will make a recommendation on a child's permanence plan.

### Method

- We looked at **baseline data** and did a deep dive of one child's case.



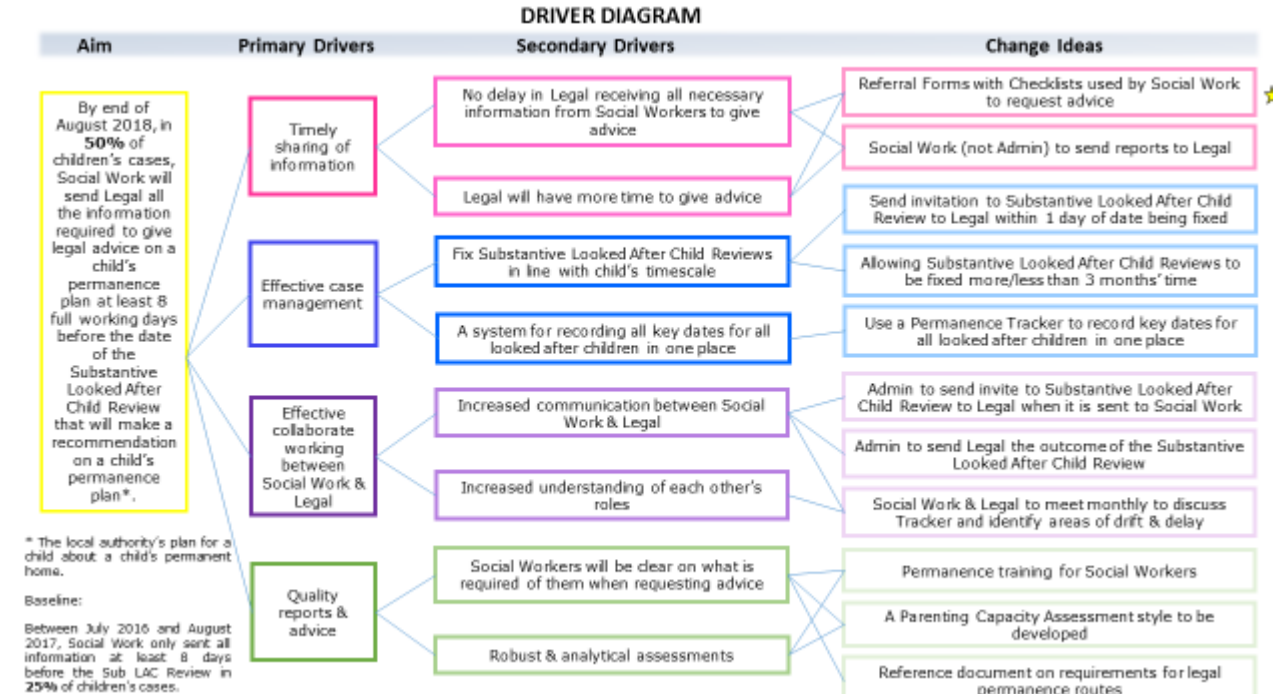
- Process mapping** helped us to identify areas of drift & delay & think of tests of change.



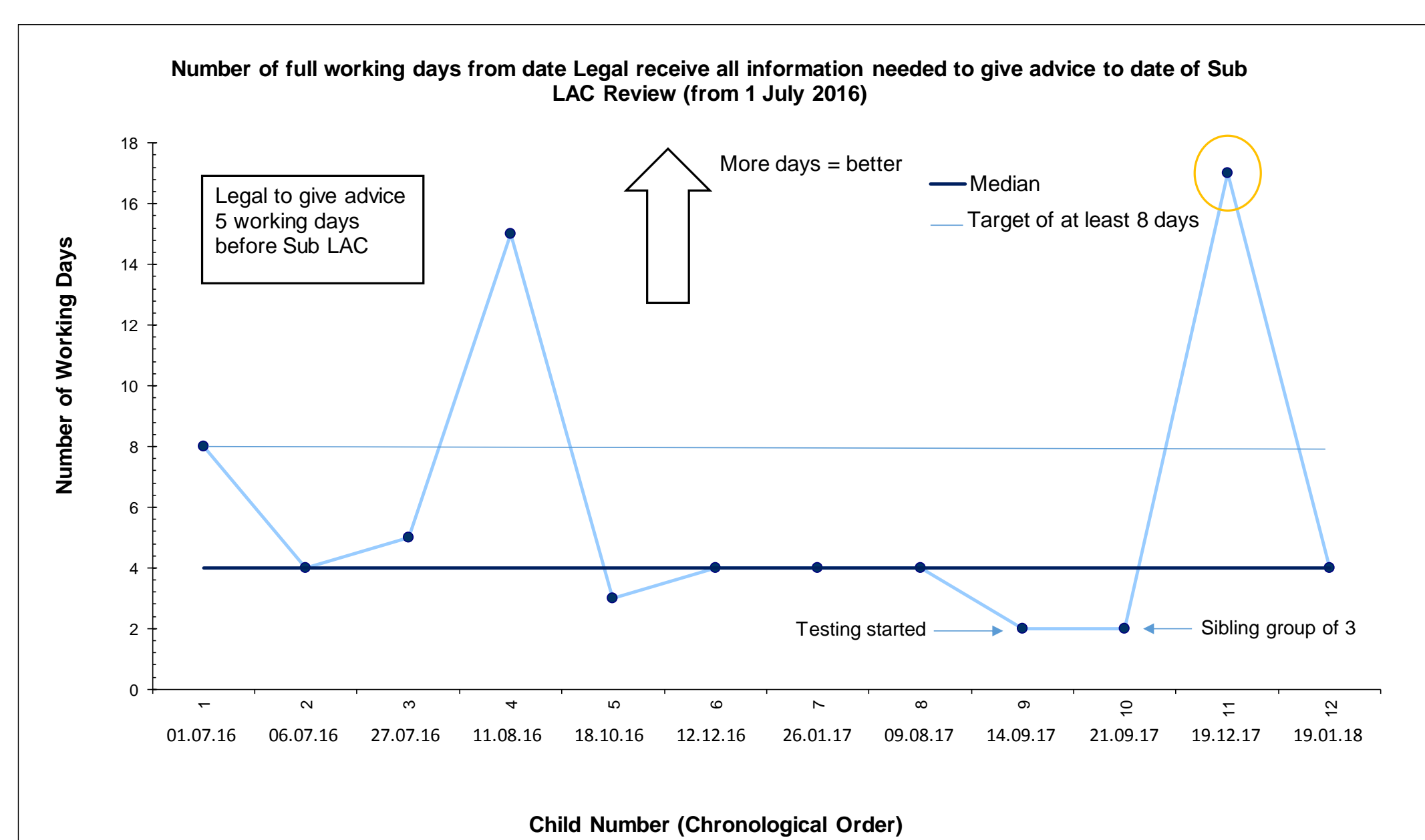
- Improvement games** helped the group understand the importance of recording data in their PDSAs.

### Process Change

- A **Referral Form** to be used by Social Workers when requesting advice.
- Aims: to **focus on the issues** that required advice; to **send all reports at the one time** to Legal; & to **give Legal at least 8 days** to give advice.



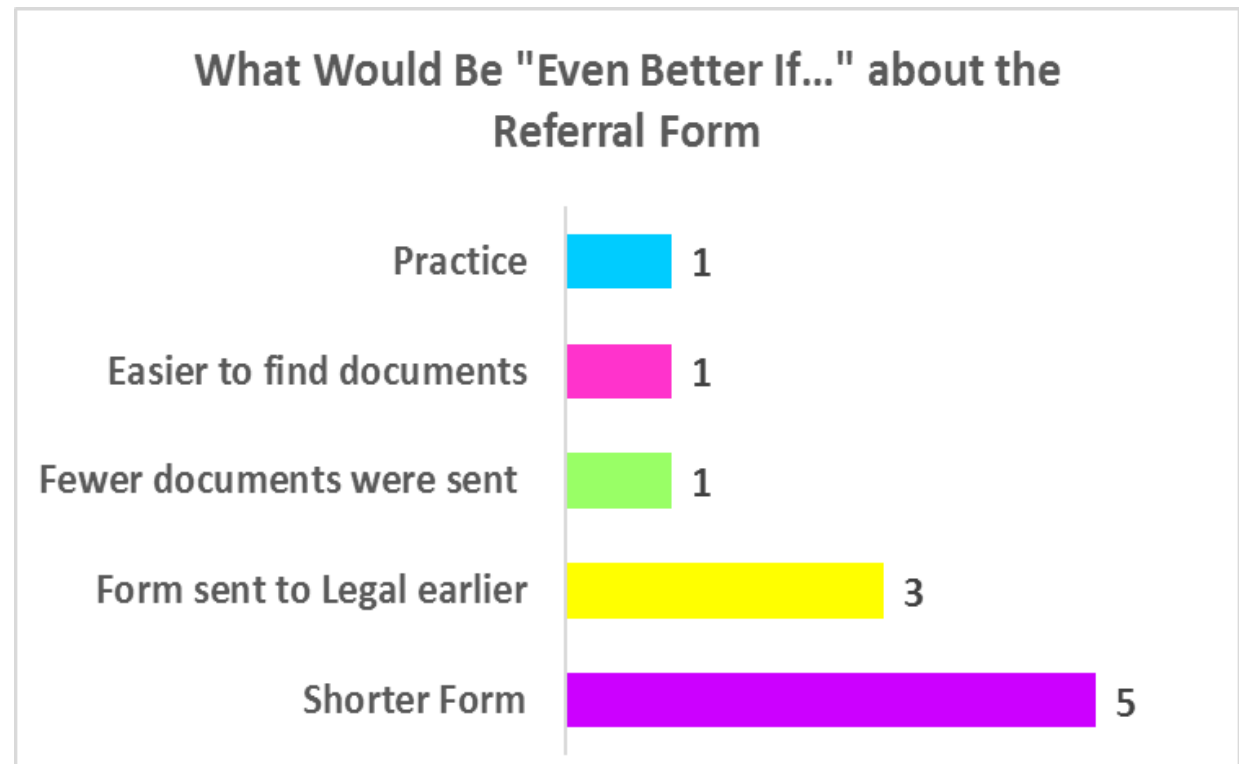
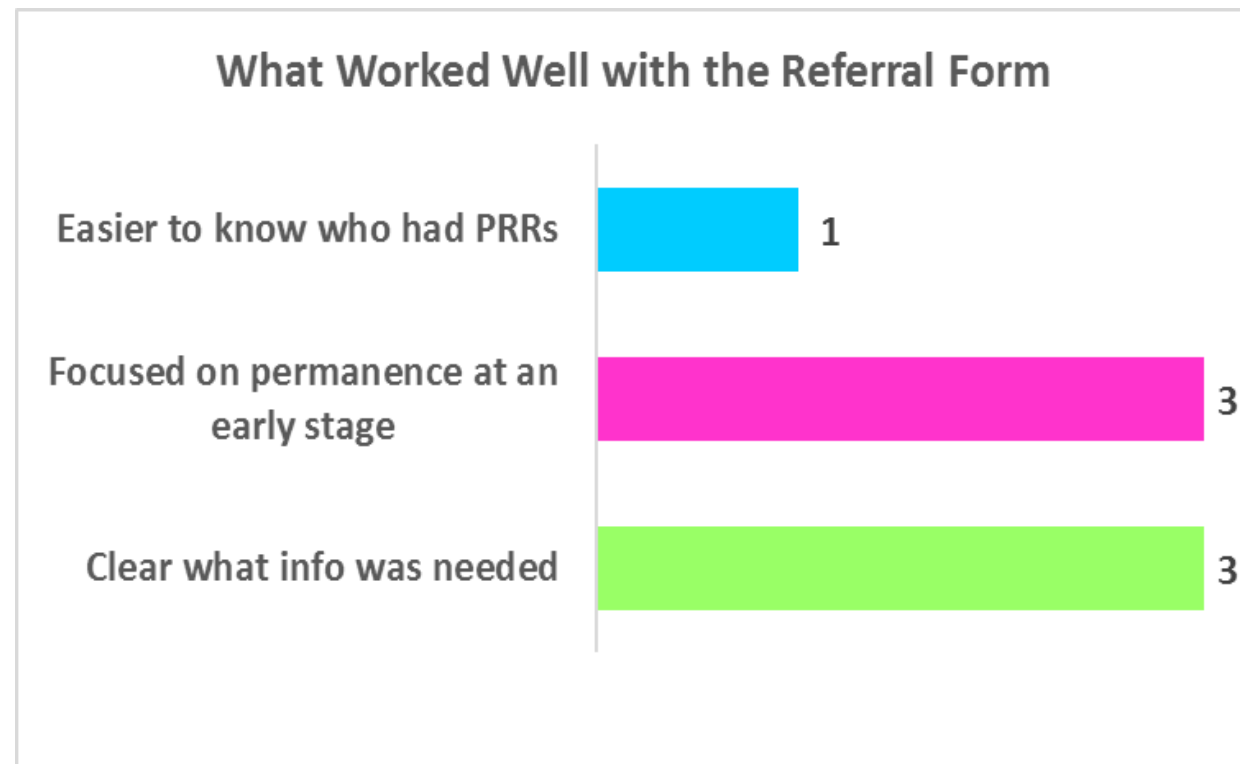
### Results (Quantitative)



- Child 11's case – exceeded target by 9 days!
- We are looking at what worked well in child 11's case to inform our next PDSA cycles.
- Need more testing!



### Results (Qualitative)



- Surveys** and **PDSAs** provided feedback on testing.
- Positive feedback, with ideas we will use to adapt the Form for further PDSA cycles.
- We missed opportunities for testing due to a Senior Manager stopping testing – difficult!

### Conclusions

- Too early to tell if we will meet our aim – but enthusiasm is high & we are still testing!

The group has really helped focus the thinking on looked after children

We have a better understanding of each other's roles

It has been very helpful to allow new ideas & consideration of doing things differently

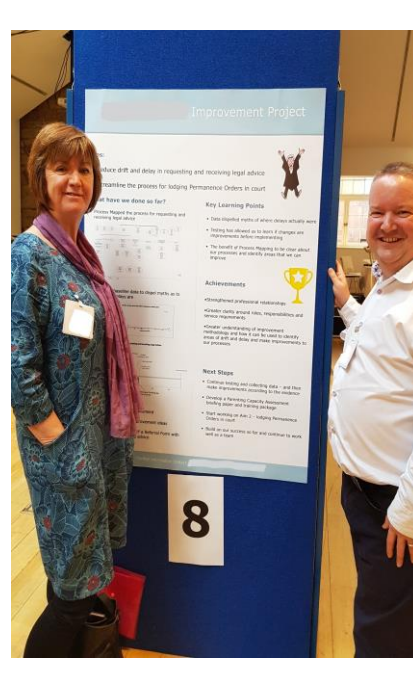
### Key Learning Points

- Working with a **multi-agency** group, & being **external** to the organisation, can be **challenging**.
- Just because you *think* you have leadership buy in, doesn't mean you have! **Keep talking to leaders!**
- Limited opportunities for testing due to complex Social Work system – so **“small wins”** were very **important**.
- Power of data** – allowed us to see what was happening for each child & investigate further.

### Achievements

- Group presented at a QI event.
- Enthusiasm to continue to improve!

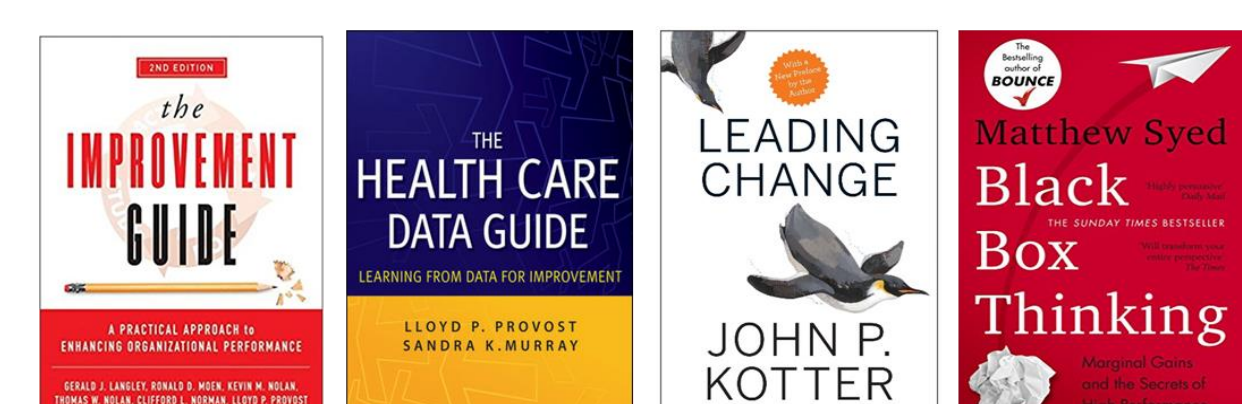
TOP ACHIEVEMENT: Improved working relationship between Social Work & Legal



### Next Steps

- Continue to use QI in my role to improve outcomes for looked after children. Keep learning!

### Key Reference Materials



**Contact: Kirsty Doull**  
Permanence Consultant – [kirsty.doull@strath.ac.uk](mailto:kirsty.doull@strath.ac.uk)  
Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS)



**ScIL**  
Scottish Improvement Leader