



30th November 2020

Agenda Item: 8

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE & IMPROVEMENT

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CORE DATA SET - PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE FOR QUARTER 2

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides the Committee with a summary of the performance and finance of the Council's services for children and young people for quarter 2 of 2020/21 (1st July to 30th September 2020).

Information

2. The Council's Planning and Performance Framework establishes the approach that the Council takes to planning and managing its performance to deliver effective and responsive services.
3. The Council has agreed that the key measures of its performance will be defined through a number of core data sets which are detailed in its Council Plan and each of its Departmental Strategies.
4. Performance against these core data sets is reported to Committee every three months (quarterly) to support the performance management of the delivery of services.

Performance Reporting for 2020/21

5. This report provides a summary of the quarter 2 position for the Children's Social Care and Education Core Data Set performance measures that fall within the responsibility of the Children and Young People's Committee. The full Core Data Set is included in **Appendices 1 and 2**. **Appendix 1** shows those measures which have received updates since the previous quarter. **Appendix 2** shows those measures which have not changed.
6. For each measure, the following information is provided:
 - Current performance and whether a high or low value is regarded as 'good'.
 - The period this current value relates to.

- An indication of whether performance has improved (+), declined (-), or remained the same (=) over the current reporting period. The most recently available annual performance and which year this relates to.
- The underlying numbers used to calculate the % for some measures is provided within the measure description.
- If a measure is cumulative, this is stated in the measure description.
- Comparator data of the national average for England, and that of the Council's children's services statistical neighbours, where this data is available.

Child and Family Assessments

7. Data confirms that there has been continued positive performance in this quarter with the target being met and indeed exceeded. Given the additional challenges the service has faced, this is testimony to their hard work and commitment.

Child Protection

8. The numbers of children on child protection plans in Nottinghamshire has increased slightly this quarter. This was expected due to lock down restrictions easing in quarter 2 and children returning to schools at the beginning of September. The quarter 2 figure remains above that of statistical neighbours and the national average. Further attention is being given at a senior level to provide additional insight into this.
9. The current figure of 3.7% of child protection plans lasting two or more years, although an increase on quarter 1, remains within target, and in-line with both statistical neighbour and England figures.
10. The proportion of children becoming subject of a repeat plan within two years has increased again this quarter, continuing the trend. According to the quality assurance data collected by conference chairs, the concerns identified for these families included drug and alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, mental health and neglect. Any case going to conference where there has been a previous plan must receive service manager approval. Work to date has indicated these decisions have been correct. The figure reduces significantly if judged against previous plans in the last two years. This information has been shared with the relevant children's service managers in order to inform continued oversight of this issue and is currently subject to targeted attention by senior managers.
11. The percentage of Child Protection cases reviewed in timescale increased slightly from quarter 1, from 95.4% to 96.1%. This is slightly below the target of 98% but above both statistical neighbour and England figures.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing

12. There has been a rise in the number of children reported to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as being at risk of CSE although this is still below the value of quarter 3 (2019/20). This was expected following the easing of lock down measures (which had resulted in a reduction of referrals to the MASH last quarter). Seventeen children are currently being discussed at CSE multi-agency strategy meetings and none of these are looked after children. This figure is in line with pre-lockdown quarters and again is an expected increase to previous levels. The overall approach to child exploitation is currently

under review and receiving close management attention. More detailed analysis should be available in the next reporting cycle.

13. There has been a rise in number of children reported missing overall. There has been a rise in the percentage of missing children who are missing from care (and reduction in those missing from home) and also a rise in the number of missing occurrences. The figures are however consistent with the pre-lockdown figures of quarter 3 and quarter 4. The percentage of all looked after children who have had a missing episode in the quarter has risen, but still remains below the figure for statistical neighbours and the national figure (being 84 out of the total 962 children who were looked after by the LA at the end of quarter 2.) There has been a small but welcome improvement in the number of return interviews completed within timescale, and a small but welcome reduction in the percentage of children reported missing this quarter who have gone missing five or more times in the last 12 months. These remain the subject of close management attention however.

Looked After Children

14. The stability of placements (3+ in a year) considers children in care (CiC) who have had more than three placements during the previous 12 months as a proportion of all CiC. The current performance is consistent with the sustained improvement throughout 2019/20. This was impacted during the first quarter of the current financial year, which coincided with the initial period of national lockdown during which time placements became less stable as a direct result of measures taken by providers to maintain social distancing and, in some cases, to allow appropriate shielding of children in care with complex health needs. The latest data indicate that placements once again became more stable once lockdown restrictions were eased (albeit the actual number of children in care - and thus the volume of placements - has increased during this period). Please note: some level of caution should be exercised when benchmarking against national data because there is a difference between how the current Nottinghamshire figure is calculated and the way in which the national average data was computed in 2018/19. It effectively over-inflates the Nottinghamshire figure, hence the target of 12% has been derived to account for this.
15. The continuing trend of improvement in the percentage of children remaining in long term placements underlines the fact that a majority of children in care experience vary stable placements over the longer term, and that thankfully the impact of the coronavirus on placement stability to date has affected only a relatively small number of children in care. Additionally, the computation of this performance indicator belies the fact that planned placement moves are part of the normal care plan for older young people in care as they transition into semi-independent accommodation to equip them with independence skills as part of their wider transition into adulthood. Please note: the same issue around differences in data computation described above regarding stability of placements applies equally to this indicator, hence this target has likewise been modified to account for this.

Adoption

16. The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family has fallen significantly in quarter 2. This measure has changed slightly and is now adjusted for foster carer adoptions so that if a child(ren) is/are adopted by their foster carer, the clock stops when they moved in with that foster carer. The low value this quarter (252) is due to there having been seven Adoption Orders made, of which three were children adopted by

their foster carers. For these children the time between being fostered by their carer and that placement becoming an adoptive placement is not counted.

17. The average time between the Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match has also decreased significantly this quarter. The low value in this quarter's figures seems to be due to there having been seven Adoption Orders made with three of these being foster carers who adopted. The value is low as the children placed with foster carers who are approved to adopt have had their matches approved without delay. The other children not adopted by their foster carers were young children who were matched speedily with adopters post placement order.

Care leavers

18. Despite the impact of Covid-19 on the care leaver population in respect of attending education provision and the impact on employment opportunities/income, the Council has managed to support our young people to a level which remains above the target of 49%. This has been through negotiations by Personal Advisors and Achievement Advisers with educational establishments to ensure that courses and classes could still be accessed online, and provision of resources to do this identified where required. This has also included the participation and distribution of the Government laptops to the 18-25 year old leaving care cohort. The Council has assisted young people to find or continue in their employment where possible (including identifying suitable accommodation provision for a young person who was a front line key worker who could not remain working whilst in the staying put placement as his ex-foster carers were needing to shield). The Council continues with the links with the Department for Work and Pensions and fast-tracking claims and employment support. In September 2020 the new Personal Education Plans were launched across Nottinghamshire which includes the Employability Assessment PEP for 16-17 year old looked after children and this feeds into the Employability Assessment Tool (EAT) post 18 years. Additional capacity has been recruited within Leaving Care in respect of Achievement Advisers and the Council is currently expanding and re-launching the Achievement Service offer to 16-17 year old looked after children and care leavers in conjunction with partners and our Local Offer. This is aimed for a full launch in the New Year.
19. Covid has also had an impact on the accommodation availability and move-on within Nottinghamshire and especially the demands on Supported Accommodation Providers. The Homelessness Prevention Personal Adviser has worked hard with district councils and supported accommodation providers in cases where young people have faced homelessness, as part of the "everybody in" campaign. A number of young people have moves to their own council accommodation with additional support from the Transitional Personal Adviser and Personal Adviser service in order to sustain this, as well as exploring other accommodation options including a linked apprenticeship/accommodation offer, additional supported accommodation provision, move-on accommodation for former unaccompanied asylum seeking children and an emergency bed space solely allocated for Nottinghamshire care leavers. A number of young people returning from education (university) have moved back to the Nottinghamshire area, and they have taken up private rented accommodation or council accommodation. There are very few young people in HMOs and those that are in them are there due to their own choice (sharing university accommodation) or in order to meet their needs at this present time.

Youth Offending

20. The level of first time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17 years (per 100,000) is well under the level seen in same quarter last year, and can be attributed in part to the compliance of young people with the Covid 19 lockdown. Performance of the partnership in reducing first time entrant rate will be better understood as the data is seen now lockdown has lifted.

Summary Financial Position

21. The Children and Families Department Revenue Budget is forecast to underspend by £0.013m (0.01%) as summarised in the Table below.
22. The Authority has received four tranches of main Covid 19 grant allocations totalling £47.1m. This amount was not factored into projections when setting the 2020/21 budget in February 2020. A revised budget estimate has therefore been set whereby Covid 19 grant has been allocated across Committee budgets based on the current known financial impact of the Covid 19 crisis and Table 1 reflects the position after the allocation of this funding.

Table 1 – Summary Revenue Position

Forecast Variance as at Period 5	Division	Annual Budget	Actual to Period 6	Year-End Forecast	Under(-) / Overspend Variance	Variance as % of Budget
£000		£000	£000	£000	£000	%
	Children & Young People's Committee					
1,712	Youth, Families & Social Work	62,217	29,413	62,351	134	0.22
421	Education Learning & Skills	6,801	2,830	6,855	54	0.79
7,522	Commissioning & Resources	68,810	26,059	68,559	(251)	0.36
0	Capital & Central Charges	13,940	(28)	13,990	50	0.36
9,655	Net Committee Overspend	151,768	58,274	151,755	(13)	0.01

23. The Youth, Families & Social Work Division is forecasting an overspend of £0.1m. The major contributing factor is a £1.3m overspend on social work staffing which has arisen due to a combination of additional capacity staff to respond to anticipated increased workloads, maintain manageable caseloads, new posts to be established and agency workers.
24. The forecast agency spend for the Hard to Retain teams is £5.6m (2019-20 £5.4m). There were 79.3 fte agency Team Managers and Social Workers at the end of September and it is estimated that there will be 68.3 fte agency workers by the end of March 2021. This equates to an average of 76 fte agency workers for the year. The forecast also includes 27.11 fte agency Social Work Assistants and a reduction to reflect the annual leave, sickness and Bank Holidays to be taken by agency workers. All agency posts continue to

require the explicit approval of the Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work, and are subject to scrutiny by the quarterly Agency Challenge Panel.

25. The overspend was offset by a net underspend of £1.2m across all other budgets which includes vacancies, staff related running expenses, non-looked after children placements, additional grant income and income from selling beds in Children with Disability homes.
26. The Education, Learning & Skills Division is reporting a £0.1m overspend. The major contributing factor is a £0.6m overspend on the school improvement sold service offer offset by a £0.5m underspend on all other budgets. A review of the sold service offer for 2020/21 and beyond has been undertaken.
27. The Commissioning & Resources division is reporting a £0.2m underspend. The major contributing factor is a £0.7m underspend on Children's Centres of which approximately £0.4m is staffing related due to vacancies and a temporary subsidy on the NHS Employers pension rate for 2020-21. There is also £0.1m of additional gainshare income, related to the former Children's Centre contract, which exceeded expectations.
28. The overspend on external residential placements for Children Looked After is £0.3m which is mainly due to general cost increases observed towards the end of 2019-20 and the cost of additional support for complex cases.
29. External LAC numbers increased by a net of 14 in September, which was six more than predicted. The composition/ placement mix however was relatively favourable (Independent Fostering Agencies increased by five, Supported Accommodation by three more costly semi-independent spot purchases by two and residential by four, of which two were time limited Parent & Baby placements). Additional Health contributions of £0.147m, offset increased costs in the month resulting in a net marginal change overall.
30. The remaining £0.2m overspend is attributable to Short Breaks, ICDS Direct Provider Services attributable to commissioned Personal Care costs and various other budgets across the division.
31. Clayfields is currently forecasting a surplus against its income target of £0.411m. From early September 2020 it has been invoicing for all beds, including extra costs for 1:1 and 2:1 support. Additionally, the Youth Custody Service have approved an inflationary increase to bed prices backdated to April 2020. Any surplus at the end of the financial year will be added to the trading reserve balance which is £0.180m.
32. As well as the implications arising from the Covid-19 emergency the main areas of risk associated with the forecast are in relation to external residential placements and social work staffing due to the volatile nature of the demand on these budgets. In view of the high cost of external residential placements the forecast is highly sensitive to changes in e.g. numbers, weekly costs (due to complexity of need, market conditions, inflation, capacity of internal provision) and placement mix. There is a robust monthly monitoring process to track trend data, average costs and actual numbers of children in placement to highlight potential issues as soon as possible.

Other Options Considered

33. This report is provided as part of the Committee's constitutional requirement to consider performance of all areas within its terms of reference on a quarterly basis. The departmental strategy was agreed on 24th January 2018 and the format and frequency of performance reporting were agreed by the Improvement and Change Sub-Committee on 12th March 2018. Due to the nature of the report no other options were considered appropriate.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

34. This report is provided as part of the Committee's constitutional requirement to consider performance of areas within its terms of reference on a quarterly basis.

Statutory and Policy Implications

35. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

36. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

37. Reporting on the performance of services for looked after children and care leavers will better enable the Council to ensure that children are effectively safeguarded.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That Committee considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the performance information on the Council's services for children and young people for the period 1st July to 30th September 2020.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 12/11/20)

38. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Financial Comments (SAS 14/11/20)

39. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Performance reporting \(Quarter 1 2020/21\) – services for children and young people: report to Children and Young People's Committee on 21st September 2020.](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1406