

13th December 2021

Agenda Item: 4

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE & IMPROVEMENT

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CORE DATA SET - PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE FOR QUARTER 2 2021/22

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 2021/22 (1st July to 30th September 2021). Committee is asked to agree that future quarterly performance reports include measures relating to the known pressures in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, as this remains one of the highest concerns for the Department and should be brought to the attention of Members and monitored closely.

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 2021/22

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. We continue to meet our target with the majority of Child and Family Assessments being undertaken well within timescales, in line with our approach which is to ensure that assessments are timely and proportionate.

Child Protection

8. There has been a slight increase this quarter in the number of children in Nottinghamshire subject to a Child Protection plan, however the Authority remains in line with its statistical neighbours.
9. Child Protection Coordinator's (CPCs) continue to closely monitor the length of time a child has been subject to a Child Protection plan and there remains a robust system in place of review and monitor for children who are on a plan for over 15 months. There is also a system in place to manage drift and delay to prevent new cases being on Child Protection plans for extended periods of time.
10. There continues to be work ongoing around the increase in repeat Child Protection plans across the Authority and processes remain in place to monitor these, including Children's Service Managers being alerted to a repeat plan being requested so that this can be monitored. This remains a discussion point within the quarterly meetings between CPCs and team managers within social care across the County, and the ongoing use of complex case panel and Multi Agency Problem-solving (MAPs) meetings is encouraged to try and support thinking around complex situations within family units. The Service is looking at repeat plans in more detail to try and establish any additional actions that could be taken to reduce these figures.
11. Participation from health in Child Protection Conferences continues to be impacted by the low participation rates for GPs. Work has been undertaken with GPs around providing information for conference and it is hoped that this will start to make a positive change to these figures. Overall, participation from other agencies remains good, however this quarter has been lower than last, but this is to be expected with the summer period. As we move out of the pandemic the Service is looking at hybrid ways of working to maintain participation from outside agencies and will look to accommodate for both in-person and virtual attendance in order to keep attendance rates at conferences high.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing

12. There is some variance in numbers of children reported to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub throughout the year. It is likely that numbers dipped in quarter 3 of 2020/21 due to Covid restrictions and as expected increased during quarter 4 2020/21 & quarter 1 of 2021/22 as Covid restrictions eased. Numbers have however decreased for quarter 2 2021/22 which is also reflected in numbers of children subject to a Child Sexual Exploitation meeting. This is also reflected in a reduction in young people experiencing high risk Child Sexual Exploitation incidents (monitored at Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel). The data will be analysed to consider any reasons for the decrease in Child Sexual Exploitation occurrences recorded.
13. There has been no significant change in data this quarter in comparison with previous quarters. The numbers of children missing from home and care has risen slightly which is in line with expectations given the easing of Covid-19 restrictions. There has been a slight increase in the percentage of Nottinghamshire Looked After Children missing from placement by individual child and this issue will be analysed to consider any specific reasons and concerns.

Looked After Children

14. This measure considers children in care who have had more than three placements during the previous 12 months as a proportion of all children in care. There has been a declining trend in performance during the past 12-18 months (i.e. an increasing proportion of young people experiencing 3+ placement moves within a year, increasing from 10.2% of children in care in Quarter 2 2020-21 to 13.2% in Quarter 2 2021-22), reflecting the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the challenge it continues to present in maintaining stable placements which has been referenced in this commentary during previous quarters. Contemporaneous evidence from benchmarking with other authorities across the region is that this is a widespread issue, albeit one that is not readily picked in this analysis that effectively benchmarks against pre-pandemic national data. It is nevertheless the first time this indicator has not been RAG rated green and the situation will continue to be closely monitored, to assess if there are any longer-term impacts emerging.
15. Although this data continues to evidence that the majority of children in care experience very stable placements over the longer term, it also shows a steady decline in performance during the past 12-18 months. Again, like placement stability mentioned above, it is very much reflective of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Furthermore, older children in care aged 16+, who make up more than 25% of the total number of Nottinghamshire's children in care population, typically experience changes of placement as part of their care plan as they move into semi-independent accommodation as part of their wider transition into adulthood. This does have the effect of distorting the overall picture around placement stability.

Adoption

16. The time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family continues to improve. Very few children have to wait unless they have extra needs as there is usually a choice of placement options.

17. Performance for the time between the Local Authority receiving the court authority and deciding on a match has declined as there have been long delays in court waiting for final hearings, which increased due to the pandemic. The length of time will also be impacted by a few harder to place children.

Care Leavers

18. Due to a known issue on Mosaic, which is affecting the updating of care leaver information on employment, education, and training and accommodation, the performance indicators for quarter 4 cannot be accurately calculated. In April, the Service identified 93 young people whose data could not be updated due to this issue. The Information and Systems Team have resolved the problem.
19. Following the resolution of this issue, the Service has been working to update all records which were affected, and this work is ongoing. As such, it is not possible at present to report accurate performance metrics for care leavers.

Youth Offending

20. The rate (per 100,000 population) of First Time Entrants saw a slight reduction when compared with the same period last year. This quarter saw a reduction in the number of violence offences, while the proportion of weapons offences remains high. Nationally, Possession of Weapon offences made up 19% of all offences committed by First Time Entrants (in the most recent Youth Justice National Statistics), a proportion which has been increasing over the last ten years. Locally, Weapons Possession accounted for 26% of First Time Entrants for the 12 months to the end of March 2021.
21. This could be impacted by a local protocol which means the vast majority of young people found in possession of a knife receive a minimum outcome of an out of court disposal (as opposed to community resolution which would mean their offence would not be counted in these statistics). The protocol is considered a positive, as it provides the Youth Justice Service the opportunity to identify underlying factors to the offence and offer support to prevent future offending. Measures are also in place to ensure children are not unnecessarily criminalised. The knife and weapons guidance for schools and education providers has been updated this quarter to support schools with early identification and intervention, as well as decision making when an incident occurs on school premises. The Youth Justice partnership monitor the location of weapons offences and where patterns emerge targeted projects in schools and the community are delivered.

Performance Summary

22. In summary, the majority of measures show continuing strong performance across the Department, with measures of interest to Ofsted such as Assessment Timescales performing very well. The few measures that are not performing as well are all under close scrutiny by the Department.

Summary Financial Position

23. The Children and Families Department Revenue Budget is forecast to overspend by £2.2m after planned use of grant reserves and excluding redundancy costs. The Annual Budget

includes an adjustment for Covid-19 additional costs. Commissioning & Resources remains the division with the highest overspend.

Table 1 – Summary Revenue Position

Forecast Variance at Period 5 £000	Division	Annual Budget £000	Actual to Period 6 £000	Year- End Forecast £000	Under (-) / Overspend Variance £000
803	Youth, Families & Social Work	56,646	24,385	56,901	255
(22)	Education Learning & Skills	6,419	2,604	6,349	(70)
1,270	Commissioning & Resources	79,530	35,827	81,523	1,993
-	Capital & Central Charges	12,892	(96)	12,892	-
2,051	Subtotal	155,487	62,720	157,665	2,178
	Traders				
(164)	Clayfields	(140)	636	(140)	-
1,887	Forecast prior to use of reserves	155,347	63,356	157,525	2,178
-	Transfer to / (from) earmarked reserves	-	-	-	-
-	Transfer to / (from) grant reserves	(928)	(279)	(978)	-
-	Transfer to / (from) Traders reserves	(206)	-	(206)	-
1,887	Net Department	154,213	63,077	156,341	2,178

24. The Youth, Families & Social Work division £0.3m of this overspend relates to social care staffing. The overspend has arisen due to the service still needing to use high levels of agency workers during the pandemic. Newly qualified social workers who have experienced their first year of practice during lockdown have not had the joint working opportunities they would have had in a non-pandemic year.
25. The forecast agency spend for the Hard to Retain teams is £5.6m (2020-21 £5.7m) and is based on 82.3fte agency Team Managers and Social Workers by the end of March 2022. The forecast also includes 33.4fte non-social work qualified agency workers by the end of March 2022. A reduction for annual leave and turnover is factored into the agency forecast.
26. £0.8m overspend (£0.8m period 5) is due to Looked After Children placements. This is attributable to personal allowance payments to Looked After Children aged 16/17 living independently £0.3m and a further £0.3m for internal specialist residential Childrens and £0.2m on the Fostering team.
27. £0.5m underspend (£0.5m period 5) on Non-Looked After Children placements. The underspend has arisen due to a decline in child arrangement orders (CAO) and adoption financial support payments (AFS). CAO placements have decreased by 19% and AFS placements by 19% since August 2020. Covid-19 has also delayed many of these orders going to court and therefore growth in the anticipated number of Special Guardianship Orders has been delayed.

28. £0.3m underspend (£0.2m period 5) on the Children with Disabilities homes. This is due to the temporary closure of Minster View £0.4m and offset by Caudwell House not yet anticipated to achieve its income target £0.1m.
29. £0.1m overspend (£0.5m period 5) in Early Help & Youth services. The overspend is due to pressures in the Early Help Unit. The decrease in overspend is due to receipt of £0.4m Covid budget for the Outdoor Education Service to compensate their loss of income.
30. £0.1m underspend on Adoption Services due to the decision to distribute part of the Adoption East Midlands reserve to respective partners.
31. The Education Learning & Skills Division is reporting a £0.1m underspend (£0.2m overspend period 5). Additional Covid grant has been allocated to fund the extra costs associated with an increase in demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) for children who have special education needs (SEN). The previous forecast included £0.2m (period 4) of additional costs which is now covered by the grant.
32. The Commissioning and Resources Division is reporting a forecast £2.0m overspend (£3.8m period 5) after use of reserves and £2.5m Covid budget allocation received in the month. There is a £3.2m overspend (£4.9m period 5) on External LAC Placements (excluding £0.5m offsetting underspends in internal foster care). The overspend includes £1.2m relating to children transferred from Minster View which remains closed and an estimated £2.0m due to market conditions and reliance on more costly placement types inevitably impacted by the pandemic. The availability of suitable foster care both internally and externally continues to be a major factor (especially for older children), so placement mix is the issue rather than excessive growth.
33. External placement numbers appeared to increase by a net of 17 in the month, however on closer scrutiny this includes some placements that started much earlier in the year (7 semi-independent contract and 1 IFA, collectively adding less than £0.2m due to relatively low unit costs). Inevitably, some of the remaining September increase relates to placements which started late August. Additionally, a spot placement which was expected to end mid-September is now continuing, adding over £0.1m. Exceptionally, an October placement in Clayfields is currently adding £0.4m to the forecast (potentially £0.8m p.a.) ahead of a more cost-effective solution.
34. There is a £1.2m underspend (£1.1m period 5) on Children's Centres and former contract related budgets. Approximately £0.3m is on budgets originally held for possible pay protection and other uncertainties, £0.2m increased Public Health Grant, a temporary subsidy on the NHS employers pension rate accounts for a further £0.1m and the remaining £0.5m is mainly due to vacancies against the original staffing budgets that were created on transfer. The £0.1m increase in the month is due to a volume of minor refinements (and roundings).
35. There is a £0.3m net overspend (£0.3m period 5) across other budget heads within the division. This mainly consists of staffing budget overspends linked to the VLT and current service demands within the Independent Chair Service and ICDS agency staff.
36. Finally, there is £0.1m net overspend (£0.1m period 5) within C&R Service Improvement budgets incorporating departmental overheads such as Trade Union recharges which

consistently exceed budget and temporary senior management costs associated with the IICSA

37. Clayfields is currently forecasting a deficit of £0.3m against its income target of £0.346m (reduced by £0.164m Covid budget this month). This takes into account a £858,000 (780 welfare bed nights @ £1,100) loss of income for the period April – September. This is due to a combination of factors, for example occupancy at Clayfields remains lower than in previous years, there are staffing vacancies which are unlikely to be filled before Christmas and complexity of young people's needs. The forecast includes a final loan repayment estimated at £0.1m and a contribution towards the increased cost of employer liability insurance of £0.2m. The balance on the trading reserve is £0.564m.

Other Options Considered

38. 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

39. 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

40. 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

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

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

42. 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

That:

- 1) 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 2021.
- 2) future quarterly performance reports include measures relating to the known pressures in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, as this remains one of the highest concerns for the Department and should be brought to the attention of Members and monitored closely.

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Constitutional Comments (ELP 17/11/21)

43. The recommendations fall within the delegation to Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its frame of reference.

Financial Comments (CDS 16/11/21)

44. There are no direct financial implications arising from the 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.

[Children and young people core data set – performance and finance for Quarter 4 2020-21 – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 26th July 2021](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1526