



7th March 2022

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE & IMPROVEMENT

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CORE DATA SET - PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE FOR QUARTER 3 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 3 of 2021/22 (1st October to 31st December 2021).

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 3 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. Performance for Child and Family Assessments completed within timescale continues to be good; a very small dip can be noted in the figures but still well within target and above statistical neighbours.

Child Protection

8. The number of children currently subject to a child protection plan within Nottinghamshire is lower than previous years. The Authority remains in line with statistical neighbours, and robust processes are in place to support other complex young people who require support but may not require a child protection plan, such as specific focus safeguarding meetings for Child Criminal Exploitation/Child Sexual Exploitation (CCE/CSE). The Service continues to monitor these processes to ensure the vulnerable children in Nottinghamshire are supported.
9. Child Protection Coordinators 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 for review and monitor of those children who are over 15 months on a plan. There is also a system in place to manage drift and delay to prevent children being on child protection plans for extended periods of time. The Concerns Resolution Process is in place to raise issues around any lengthy child protection plans, or concerns of drift and delay. The Child Protection Coordinators are also using mid-way review meetings to ensure plans are progressing and to again avoid drift and delay.
10. There has been a reduction in the number of children subject to a repeat child protection plan in Nottinghamshire, however it remains a high figure. A report looking at repeat child protection plans within Nottinghamshire is being presented to the Senior Leadership Team in February 2022. This considered current processes in place to manage complex families and proposed new ways of tracking and supporting families to try and prevent repeat child protection plans.
11. The Authority remains very mindful of the need to keep conferences within the timescales provided, and the Service continues to need Children's Service Manager approval from both the Independent Chair Service and Children's Social Care service in order to move a meeting outside of timescales, which would only be done if justified and required in order to make the meeting successful for the family. Nottinghamshire remains in line with statistical neighbours and has seen an increase in our figures since last quarter, with the aim to increase this again next quarter.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing

12. The data for missing children this quarter remains consistent with previous quarters. The Service has noted a reduction however in the numbers of children who go missing on multiple occasions and so whilst there has been some slight increase in children who have gone missing from home for the first time, it is positive that children are going missing less frequently.
13. There has been a slight reduction in children assessed as at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) both for Quarter 2 & Quarter 3. Of interest to note however is that there has been an increase this quarter in CSE meetings held for children not looked after by the Local Authority. There has been an increased number of younger children assessed as at risk of CSE this quarter and therefore more CSE meetings have been held due to the age and vulnerability of these children. Please note that these children have been impacted by online CSE. This is reflective of Police data which has similarly recorded fewer CSE crimes but an increase in online activity. Additionally, the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation panel has seen a reduction in numbers of children who have been assessed as at a high risk of CSE and this data is currently under review by partners.

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 had been a declining trend in performance during the past 12-18 months, reflecting the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the challenge it presents in maintaining stable placements. Despite this, the previous quarter's performance remains the only short period in which Nottinghamshire's performance dipped below the national benchmark. The scrutiny applied to the data following Quarter 2 did not evidence any other underlying long-term impacts on placement stability and in the latest data - back ahead of the target - reflects the continuing good work of many services and teams of professionals across the Children & Families Department that support our young people in care to have a stable home environment.
15. This data continues to evidence that the majority of children in care experience very stable placements over the longer term. But, like the placement stability Performance Indicator above, very much challenged by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and performance of this Indicator has likewise fluctuated within an overall steady decline in performance during the past 12-18 months. This Performance Indicator is further challenged by the fact that older children in care aged 16+, who make up more than 25% of the total number of Nottinghamshire's children in care population, experience changes of placement as part of their normal care plan that supports their transition into adulthood. This does have the effect of distorting the overall picture around long-term placement stability.

Adoption

16. The time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family continues to improve. 3 of the 4 children in this quarter were adopted by their foster carers, hence a shorter time period as they did not move on to other adopters.
17. Performance for the time between the Local Authority receiving the court authority and deciding on a match has declined as there are some children who, due to their age or

assessed needs, take longer to match with adopters. These are relatively few children and work is being done to identify adoptive placements as soon as possible.

Care Leavers

18. The current percentage of care leavers in education, employment, or training reflects the hard work of the workers within the Achievement Service which was set up in March 2021. The manager and four workers within the Service have been able to give advice, support and offer opportunities to young people in this age range in relation to training courses, work experience and work opportunities.
19. The current percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation can be attributed to three factors. Firstly, there is the continued steady growth in Staying Put provision. Secondly the Supported Accommodation model with its focus on problem solving in order to achieve placement stability and successful move-on through the core and cluster model. Finally, the continued impact of the Care Leaver Offer within the County which successfully provides care leavers with long term sustainable council tenancies.

Youth Offending

20. The rate (per 100,000 population) of First Time Entrants saw a slight increase when compared with the same period last year. The previous year's figures do, of course, coincide with the second quarter when Covid-19 restrictions really began to take a sustained hold which led to reduced custody throughput, though saw increased processing by police, leading to some irregular reporting. Nevertheless, figures remain lower when compared with longer term data trends. The proportion of weapons offences within the First Time Entrants cohort has decreased slightly when compared with the last quarter.

Performance Summary

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

Summary Financial Position

22. The Children and Families Department Revenue Budget is forecast to overspend by £1.7m (1.1%) after planned use of grant reserves and excluding redundancy costs.
23. The Annual Budget includes an adjustment of £5.4m for Covid-19 additional costs.
24. Commissioning & Resources remains the division with the highest forecast overspend. In period 9 this was £2.4m (3.0%), which is an increase of £0.3m from period 8.
25. Education Learning & Skills continues the trend of forecasting an underspend, however this has increased from 2.9% in period 8 to 3.9% in period 9.

Table 1 – Summary Revenue Position

Previous Variance £000	Change in Variance £000	Division	Annual Budget £000	Actual to Period 9 £000	Year-End Forecast £000	Under(-) / Overspend Variance £000	Variance as % of Budget %
		Children & Young People's Committee					
(324)	(79)	Youth, Families & Social Work	56,748	38,292	56,345	(403)	0.71
(187)	(64)	Education Learning & Skills	6,424	4,306	6,173	(251)	3.91
2,091	293	Commissioning & Resources	79,036	57,995	81,420	2,384	3.02
0	0	Capital & Central Charges	11,355	11,960	11,355	0	0.00
1,581	150	Subtotal	153,564	112,553	155,293	1,730	1.13
		Traders					
0	0	Clayfields	(25)	31	(25)	0	0.00
1,581	150	Forecast prior to use of reserves	153,539	112,584	155,268	1,730	1.13
0	0	Transfer to/(from) ear marked reserves	0	0	0	0	
0	0	Transfer to/(from) grant reserves	(873)	(195)	(873)	0	
0	0	Transfer to/(from) Traders reserves	(321)	0	(321)	0	
0	0	Redundancy Costs	0	(217)	0	0	
1,581	150	Net Department	152,345	112,172	154,074	1,730	1.13

Youth, Families & Social Work Division

26. The division is reporting a forecast £0.4m underspend (£0.3m period 8) after the planned use of reserves.
27. There is a £0.2m underspend (£0.1m underspend period 8) on social care staffing. The increase in underspend is due to small reductions in forecasts across all Children's Social Care teams from delays in recruiting agency workers.
28. The forecast agency spend for the Hard to Retain teams is £5.5m (2020-21 £5.7m) and is based on 87.5 FTE agency Team Managers and Social Workers by the end of March 2022. The forecast also includes 36.6 FTE 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.
29. £1.1m overspend (£1.1m period 8) on Looked After Children placements. This is attributable to personal allowance payments to Looked After Children aged 16/17 living independently £0.3m, £0.4m for internal specialist residential Children's Homes, £0.2m in the Contact Service and £0.2m on the Fostering team.
30. £0.5m underspend (£0.5m period 8) on Non-Looked After Children placements. The underspend has arisen due to a decline in child arrangement orders and adoption financial support payments. Child arrangement order placements have decreased by 15% and adoption financial support placements by 29% since December 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.

31. £0.8m underspend (£0.8m period 8) on the Children with Disabilities homes.
32. £0.2m underspend (£0.2m period 8) in School Swimming Service and Outdoor Education (Early Help & Youth Services).
33. £0.3m overspend (£0.3m period 8) on other budgets. The overspend is due to the departmental levy, the forecast cost of service reviews and leaving care support. Included is £0.1m of temporary costs for transforming the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and Early Help Unit to find more effective ways of working. This includes staffing from the Programme and Projects team.
34. £0.1m underspend (£0.1m period 8) on Adoption Services due to the decision to distribute part of the Adoption East Midlands reserve to respective partners.

Education Learning & Skills Division

35. The division is reporting a £0.3m underspend (£0.2m underspend period 8). Additional Covid grant has been allocated to fund the extra costs (£0.2m) associated with an increase in demand for Education, Health and Care Plans for children who have special education needs.
36. £0.1m underspend (£0.1m period 8) on ongoing pension enhancement payments due to the annual pensions increase percentage being lower than previously projected.
37. £0.2m underspend (£0.1m period 8) additional training income for the spring term in the Education Improvement Service (EIS) Sold Service and some other minor underspends across the division.

Commissioning and Resources Division

38. The division is reporting a forecast £2.4m overspend (£2.1m period 8) after use of reserves and £2.5m Covid budget allocation.
39. There is a £4.0m overspend (£3.5m period 8) on External Looked After Children Placements (excluding £0.7m offsetting underspends on internal foster care payments). The overspend includes £1.2m relating to children transferred from Minster View which remains closed. The remaining overspend is due to general market conditions, finite internal provision and some exceptionally high-cost individual placements driven by complex needs. The annual cost of the 10 highest cost placements has increased by over £1.7m compared with 12 months ago (£6.5m versus £4.8m).
40. £0.7m underspend (£0.6m period 8) on Internal Foster Care payments - included under Commissioning & Resources division for reporting purposes due to the inverse relationship with external placement costs detailed above. The forecast underspend increased slightly again in the month thus suggesting that internal placements are not currently increasing and are therefore adding pressure on external provision.

41. £0.3m net overspend (£0.3m period 8) across other budget heads within the division. This mainly consists of staffing budget overspends linked to the Vacancy Level Turnover and current service demands within the Independent Chair Service and Integrated Children's Disability Service (ICDS) agency staff.
42. £0.1m net overspend (£0.1m period 8) within Commissioning & Resources Service Improvement budgets incorporating departmental overheads such as Trade Union recharges which consistently exceed budget and temporary senior management costs associated with the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse project.
43. £1.3m underspend (£1.2m period 8) 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 £0.7m is mainly due to vacancies against the original staffing budgets that were created on transfer. The change in the month is due to ongoing minor refinements across a range of budget heads involving many budget holders.

Clayfields

44. Clayfields is currently forecasting a deficit of £0.3m against its income target of £0.346m (temporarily reduced by £0.164m Covid budget). This takes into account a £920,700 (837 welfare bed nights @ £1,100) loss of income for the period April – December. This is due to a combination of factors, for example Clayfields is currently overspending on Education due to the need to engage external support due to recruitment challenges. Occupancy at Clayfields remains lower than in previous years and Covid has resulted in a high level of staff absences at Clayfields. 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

45. 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

46. 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

47. 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

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

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

49. 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 October to 31st December 2021.

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Constitutional Comments (LPW 15/02/22)

50. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (NC 14/02/22)

51. 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 2 2021/22 – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 13th December 2021](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1545