

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting4th September 2013

1. Title of Item/Report

Children's Social Care Activity and Performance Report

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on children's social care activity and performance.

In light of the Ofsted inspection of child protection in January 2013, it had been decided to review the content and format of future children's social care reports to Cabinet.

In addition to a range of measures to illustrate the pressures experienced by the service, a number of performance indicators would also be included so that Cabinet can more closely monitor the impact of these pressures on performance and outcomes for children.

As a way of achieving this, the use of a 'process model' was approved by Cabinet on 13 June 2013.

Given the importance and profile of these issues it had been agreed that the new activity and performance reports were brought to Cabinet on a bimonthly basis i.e. every alternate Cabinet.

This was the first children's social care activity and performance report in the new format based on the available data at the end of quarter 1 (30 June 2013).

This revised format for reporting to Cabinet showed the range of key factors that impact on the levels of activity, workload pressures and performance in children's social care.

The template data that was attached to the report was designed to illustrate the following key elements:

Inputs

These measures recorded the flow of business into the social care system, the level/complexity of activity and the extent to which other

agencies were impacting on this activity. The key measures were as follows:-

- Number of contacts made with children's social care
- Number of contacts that become referrals for assessment
- Number of referrals by agency/number that do not meet social care threshold
- Referral reasons eg domestic violence, substance misuse
- Number of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) 2s by agency
- Number/proportion of contacts with an active CAF
- Number/proportion of contacts which are closed and logged
- Number/proportion of referrals resulting in no further action (NFA)

Processes

These measures related to the efficiency and effectiveness of services in managing the business i.e. the way in which business was conducted to assess needs, make decisions about support required and keep cases under review. The key measures were as follows:

- Number and timeliness of assessments
- Number and proportion of referrals that result in Section 47 (Child Protection) enquiries
- Number and timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs)
- Timeliness of Child Protection (CP) CP Reviews
- Attendance of children and young people at ICPCs and CP Reviews
- Attendance of children and young people at Looked After Children (LAC) Reviews
- Number/proportion of Care Applications to Court
- Number/proportion of LAC on Section 20 (voluntary accommodation) or Legal Orders
- Workforce composition

Outputs

These indicators were proxies for how effective processes had been in delivering results, which in turn should lead to positive outcomes for the children and young people concerned. The key measures are as follows:

- Numbers of children in need (CiN)/CP/LAC
- Re-referral rates
- Second or subsequent CP Plans
- CP plans 2 years+
- Number/proportion of those stepping down from CP Plan to CAF
- LAC Placement stability (number of placement moves both short and long term)
- Care leavers in Education Employment and Training (EET)
- Care leavers in suitable accommodation
- Numbers/proportion of children adopted or made subject to Special

Guardianship Order (SGO)/Residence Order or returned home

A summary of the available data at the end of quarter 1 (30 June 2013), along with a brief commentary highlighting the main issues raised from analysis of the information was attached to the report. Also attached to the report was the data which informed the report.

In summary, the overall picture reflected in the attached analysis was as follows:

- Inputs - continuing high levels of demand on services, but some potential indications of a slight levelling off in terms of contacts to social care, and numbers of child protection cases. It was too early to say whether this would amount to a sustained trend.
 - Processes - continuing pressures on timeliness and adverse impact on performance levels.
 - Outputs - overall sound results, suggesting that support provided for children requiring social care intervention continues to be largely effective, despite high caseloads.
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- It was noted that as some of this data had not been collected on a regular basis previously, there were still some gaps in the template. These gaps would be populated for future reports as soon as this data was available.

Performance continued to be monitored very closely via the monthly Children's Social Care Performance Clinic chaired by the Corporate Director and attended by the Head of Service and all senior managers with responsibility for children's social care. This meeting analyses a range of performance and activity data and agrees and monitors actions in response to any identified issues. This was underpinned by a range of performance clinics with operational managers across the service.

In addition there was a fortnightly Workload Pressures meeting chaired by the Corporate Director and attended by the Head of Service and key senior managers in children's social care. This meeting closely monitors staffing and allocation issues and any associated pressures across the service.

Due to continuing concerns about inappropriate referrals to children's social care and the low take up of the common assessment framework (CAF) by partner agencies, a revised referral protocol would be considered by Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB) on 19 September 2013. If agreed, this would mean that no referrals would be accepted by children's social care without prior evidence of CAF activity, unless there were immediate child protection

concerns.

The Institute of Local Governance (ILG) had been commissioned to undertake a research study in an effort to obtain a deeper understanding of some of the underlying demographic reasons behind the increase in children's social care workload in recent years. The ILG had requested bids from researchers by 12 September 2013. Updates on the progress of this research would be included in a future reports to Cabinet.

Alongside this, Cordis Bright consultants had been commissioned to undertake a review of referral and assessment activity. This was completed and the resulting report was expected shortly. This would then be considered by Children and Young People's Management Team (CYPMT) and SLSCB. A summary of the findings, recommendations and any agreed actions would be included in a future report to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The continued workload pressures and associated activity in the children's social care system and the consequent impact this is having on both performance and budget be noted.
2. Further update reports on a bi monthly basis in order to continue to monitor children's social care activity and performance be received.

3. Reasons for the Decision

There are significant and continuing pressures in the children's social care system which could potentially impact on the Council's ability to effectively safeguard children, fulfil statutory duties and remain within allocated budget.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 13th September 2013

Proper Officer
09 October 2013