

Agenda Item

**Report to CYP Select
Committee 26th March 2014**

**Report of Corporate Director,
CESC**

PERFORMANCE UPDATE Q3 2013~14

Summary

In line with the agreed framework for reporting to the Committee on performance of Children's Services, this report provides an overview of performance at the Quarter 3 period of 2013~14 (i.e. as at the end of December 2013).

Recommendation

That the performance information be received.

Background

1. At its meeting on 28th August 2013, the Committee agreed to monitor performance information for Children's Services based on a quarterly Children & Young People thematic update.
2. **Appendix 1** gives the Quarter 3 performance overview for Children & Young People Services. This includes a summary of key performance indicators linked to priorities in the Council Plan, along with commentary on other performance issues arising during the quarter.
3. Officers will present this overview for discussion with the Committee.

Peer Review and Research Activity

4. In response to the ongoing monitoring of performance in children's social care, in particular the high levels of activity and demand on services, and concerns over the continuing high rates of children in need, child protection plans, and children in care, the following work has been commissioned to provide additional insights into our practice and to support future improvement planning.
5. A Critical Friend Review of decision making and processes in relation to the child protection system was undertaken by colleagues from Northumberland County Council from 21 to 23 January 2014. Attached is a copy of the letter summarising the findings of the review, which were broadly in line with our own assessment of current functioning. The recommendations made are being taken forward, in conjunction with Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board where required.
6. A Safeguarding Practice Diagnostic will be undertaken from 25 to 27 March 2014. This three day diagnostic will be undertaken by a team of experienced peer reviewers from other Local Authorities and will be focused on social work practice and decision making in the newly formed Assessment Teams and longer term intervention in cases involving domestic

violence and neglect. This will enable us to test out the impact and progress of actions implemented in response to the Ofsted inspection of child protection in January 2013.

7. A research project has commenced with the University of Teesside, taking a more academic research focused approach to analysing the patterns of activity in Stockton-on-Tees, compared with other Councils and national trends, to identify possible reasons for the pressures in our local social care system.
8. The Committee is asked to note these projects, the progress of which will be reported back as part of future performance updates.

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CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES – PERFORMANCE UPDATE Q3 2013~14

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – PROGRESS

1. **Percentage of young people in Y12 – Y 14 (16 to 19 year olds) who are NEET.**
Performance at Q3 shows a NEET rate for Stockton of 8.8%, with 84.3% of the cohort in learning and 3.2% not known. This performance continues to be better than the Tees Valley average of 9.3% NEET, with 80.3% in learning and 7.4% not knowns.
2. **Percentage of pupils attending good or outstanding schools.** Latest published comparative data available is at 31 August, indicating that:
 - Based on all Stockton-on-Tees schools (including academies):75% of pupils were attending good or outstanding schools, compared to 76% for the England average and 78% regionally.
 - 83% of primary school pupils were attending good or better schools, higher than the national average of 77% and close to the regional average of 85%.
 - Although 61% of secondary pupils were attending good or better schools, an improvement on the position at Q2, this remains below the national average of 75% and regional average of 70%.
3. **Percentage of schools judged to be good or outstanding.** Latest published comparative data available is at 31 August, indicating that:
 - Based on all Stockton-on-Tees schools (including academies):78% were good or outstanding, the same as the England average, below the regional average of 83%.
 - 87% of primary schools were judged as good or outstanding at their last inspection, compared to an England average of 78% and regional average of 85%.
 - For secondary schools, 50% were judged as good or outstanding compared to an England average of 71% and regional average of 67%.

The Education Improvement Service are continuing to monitor schools closely and target support according to assessed risk; local information (subsequent to the published Ofsted data at end of August) indicates some positive progress in secondary schools requiring improvement.
4. **Proportion of children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time, within two years.** Q3 performance of 5.3% equates to 14 children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time within 24 months from a cohort of 266. Performance remains in line with target expectations although there was a significant increase in activity from the previous quarter, largely due to the impact of sibling groups. The 14 children are from 5 family groups.
5. **Proportion of child protection plans lasting 2 years or more.** Q3 performance of 1.3% equates to 4 children from a cohort of 304 who were the subject of a child protection plan lasting 2 years or more. During the quarter there have been no further children on a plan for 2 years or more than reported at Q2. Performance remains within target expectations and is a significant improvement on the previous quarter. All children who have been on a plan for 15 months are reviewed via Children's Social Care Performance Clinics to ensure reviews are completed within timescales and plans ceased where appropriate.

6. **Timeliness of assessments.** In line with the requirements of the national 'Working Together To Safeguard Children' guidance, a new Single Assessment Process was introduced on 3rd February 2014. As this report is for the period up to the end of December 2013, the following relates to the previous separate Initial and Core Assessment processes:

- **Initial assessments.** Q3 performance equates to 962 Initial Assessments completed within 10 days, from a total of 1918 Initial Assessments. Although an improvement on the position at Q2, performance was below target expectations and the previous year's outturn. Weekly detailed case level reports on active assessments are provided to support close monitoring of performance, and further scrutiny takes place at the monthly Children's Social Care Performance Clinic. Overall these arrangements have had a positive impact - since these revised monitoring arrangements were introduced in March 2013, the average time current assessments have been open has reduced from 42.9 days to 11.8 days.
- **Core assessments.** Q3 performance of 66.9% equates to 828 Core Assessments completed with 35 days from a total of 1237 Core Assessments. This is an improvement on Q2 performance and is above the target for the year. Weekly detailed case level reports on active assessments continue to be provided to support close monitoring of performance, and further scrutiny takes place at the monthly Children's Social Care Performance Clinic.

In the future, timeliness will be monitored and reported against a 45 day target for completion of single assessments. Whilst the new process cannot be compared directly with the previous arrangements, data shows that nearly 90% of the initial and core assessments undertaken between April to December 2013 were completed within 45 days.

7. **Free early education / childcare places available for eligible 2 yr olds.** At Q3 Stockton has 590 free early education and childcare places available for eligible 2 year olds. 309 places have been taken up and 99 children are currently waiting to be placed. Performance has met and exceeded target.
8. **Long term placement stability for looked after children – proportion of current placement for 2 years.** Q3 performance of 55.9% equates to 57 children from a cohort of 102 who have lived in the same placement for at least 2 years. Cases where children have moved placement within the two years are monitored closely through the Children's Social Care Performance Clinic - analysis continues to show that many of the placement moves are in fact planned moves to appropriate forms of permanency, as opposed to unplanned moves that might risk stability of the child's support.

GENERAL THEMATIC PERFORMANCE ISSUES

9. **Ofsted inspections of schools and settings** – key points to note from the most recent published data regarding inspection outcomes are as follows:
- **Children's Homes:** (provisional data) – three homes inspected during July to September 2013 were all rated good. The regional average for the same period was 76% good / 7% outstanding; the national average was 58% good / 12% outstanding.
 - **Childminders:** (provisional data) – for those inspected in the year up to 31st August 2013, the proportion good / outstanding (73%) was above national and regional averages. For all childminders, based on their last inspection, 71% are good / outstanding – the same as the regional average and narrowing the gap towards the England average of 75%.

- **Childcare:** (provisional data) - for those inspected in the year up to 31st August 2013, the proportion good / outstanding (71% good, none outstanding) was above the national average of 68% but below the regional average of 77%. For all childminders, based on their last inspection, 76% are good / outstanding – below the 82% average for both the region and England.
 - **Children’s Centres:** (final data) – for the 6 inspections between April 2010 and 31st August 2013, the proportion rated good / outstanding (67% good / none outstanding) was below the national average of 69% and regional average of 74%.
 - **Schools:** - a summary is given on page 3 of this report in relation to schools / pupils attending schools rated good / outstanding.
10. **CAF** – Year to date activity is in line with the previous year with no significant change in the overall level of CAFs undertaken across agencies. CAF arrangements have been subject to multi-agency discussion and review at the Stockton-on-Tees Local Children Safeguarding Board, with a revised protocol for managing referrals in place which should impact on CAF levels; and proposals made to strengthen the CAF team. An Integrated Quality Assurance Group (a multi –agency group including Lead Professionals) is in place to audit and quality assure CAF practice. Additionally, CAF documentation is being reviewed in line with the Single Assessment process to be more streamlined.
11. **Looked After Children placement stability and permanence** – despite the continuing demands of higher levels of children in care, the following indicators represent positive performance.
- **Shorter term placement stability** (i.e. 3 or more placements during the year) has remained within target range. The rolling year performance at the end of December was 8.4% (32 children who had three or more placements, from a total of 380). Although an increase on the position at quarter 2 of 7.1%, performance remains well inside the rate of 10.8% for the previous year.
 - Effective use continues to be made of **other routes to permanency**. Of the 124 children who ceased to be in care at the end of Q1:
 - 65 (52.4%) returned home in line with the previous years performance
 - 20 (16.1%) were the subject of a Special Guardianship Order, in line with the previous years performance.
 - Residence orders have increased to 16.1% although below the previous years performance of 22.0%
 - 20 children (16.1%) have been adopted, a good improvement on the previous years performance of 12.9%.
 - With regard to **timeliness of the adoption process**, of the twenty children placed for adoption at the end of December:
 - The average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family was 531 days, significantly better than the national threshold of 647 days and well below the average of 707 days for 2012/13.
 - The average time (in days) between the Local Authority receiving authority from the Courts to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family has also showed significant improvement. At the end of December, the average time was 253 days,

although below the national average of 210 days, this is a significant improvement on the average of 363 days for 2012/13.

As reported previously, these timescale measures do not always reflect the complexities of individual cases or the quality of the placement decisions made for children involved. However, performance represents a significant improvement on the previous year and a continuing improvement trend.

Care Leavers.

- Of the 91 eligible care leavers aged 16 to 21yrs during the period, all but 3 (a 16yr old and 2 20ys olds) were in suitable accommodation.
- Of the care leavers, 48.4% were in EET, with a reducing pattern of engagement across all age groups although the highest proportion of these are 18 and over.