

Theme summary – Children & Young People (CESC PIs)	
Under this theme the following indicators are included in the corporate basket:	Progress
Initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 10 working days of referral from 45.4% in 2010/11 to 60% in 2011/12.	
Core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement from 50.6% in 2010/11 to 60% in 2011/12.	
Proportion of child protection plans over 2 years duration – reduce to 0% by 2013.	
Proportion of second or subsequent child protection plans within a 24 month period – <5%.	Target was 5%– year end out-turn of 5.5% is within agreed 2% tolerance range.
No 'priority actions' (or equivalent) are identified in Ofsted inspection of children's services.	
Improve the proportion of pupils making the expected level of progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in English to 90% in 2011/12.	Reported at Q 2
Improve the proportion of pupils making the expected level of progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in Maths to 89% in 2011/12.	Reported at Q 2
Achievement of 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths at 58.3% in 2011/12.	Reported at Q 2
Reduce the Early Years attainment gap (target of 30.5% for 2011~12).	Reported at Q 2
Reduce the SEN / non-SEN attainment gap at Key Stage 2 (target of 48% for 2011~12) and Key Stage 4 (target of <44% for 2011~12).	Reported at Q 2
Reduce the fsm / non-fsm attainment gap (target of 20% at KS2 and 31.3% at KS4 for 2011~12).	Reported at Q 2
No Schools to be in an OFSTED category.	
Maintain the persistent absence (PA) rate in secondary schools at <5%	
Reduce further the NEET rate – target of 9% for 2011~12.	Had reduced to under 9% by end of March.
Short term placement stability for looked after children: 3+ placements per year to be maintained at <10%.	
Long term placement stability for looked after children: proportion with latest placement of over 2 years to increase to 65%.	
The average SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) score for looked after children improves to <14.0 by 2012~13.	Update awaited.

Overall progress

Performance

1. The overall quality of inspected provision (schools; children's centres; children's homes; childcare and early years settings) remains good, compared to benchmark groups.
2. Up to the end of the Spring Term 2012, we continued to have no maintained schools in an Ofsted category. It should be noted that a new school inspection framework was implemented by Ofsted from January 2012, which makes comparisons over the whole school year difficult due to the way in which judgements will have changed under the new framework. During the autumn and spring terms of the current school year, 9 of our schools have been inspected.
 - 5 were inspected in the autumn term period under the previous Ofsted framework, with 3 judged as good and 2 as satisfactory for their overall effectiveness.
 - 4 schools have been inspected under the new framework (effective from January 2012) with 3 schools judged as good and 1 as satisfactory.
 - As at the end of the spring term, 71% of our schools were judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness at their last inspection.
 - Latest available (provisional) national data is for the end of December 2011 (i.e. before the new framework came into operation), which indicated that 70% of all schools were judged good or outstanding.
3. Secondary school persistent absence rates presented some challenge during the past school year.
 - Latest nationally released data for the 2010~11 school year indicated a persistent absence rate of 5.2% for Stockton-on-Tees secondary schools.
 - This compares to a N.E. Regional average of 4.4% and national average of 4%.
4. Childcare and Childminder quality is a priority area for further improvement, and inspection outcomes for such provision over the year indicate an improving position:
 - of 28 Childcare Settings inspected during the year, 22 (79%) were good or outstanding, a significant improvement on the 50% for inspected settings during the previous year; and good progress from the 60% reported in the August 2011 Ofsted Performance Profile, which is based on the last inspection for all currently registered provision (and gave comparator performance of 68% for Statistical Neighbours; and 75% for England);
 - of 17 Childminders subject to full inspections during the year, 14 (83%) were good or outstanding, a significant improvement on the 62% for the previous year; and good progress from the 57% reported in the August 2011 Ofsted Performance Profile, which is based on the last inspection for all currently registered provision (and gave comparator performance of 60% for Statistical Neighbours; and 66% for England).
5. All four Children's homes were subject to interim inspections during the Q4 period:
 - 3 (75%) were judged to be making good progress in improving the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people since the most recent full inspection; and 1 (25%) making satisfactory progress.

- To compare with latest available national benchmarks – of 178 interim inspections during the Q3 period (1 October and 31 December), 58% were judged to be making good progress and 30% satisfactory progress.
6. There has been a significant increase in the volume of CAF (Common Assessment Framework) activity over the year, compared to the previous year. Although there was a peak during Q3 of the 2011~12 period, Q4 saw continued high levels of activity. CAF activity is a proxy indicator for improved multi-agency early intervention and prevention. It is expected that levels of activity will level off, given the high levels of engagement now being sustained across partner agencies.
 7. Good progress has been maintained in relation to timeliness of social care assessments, building on the gradual improvement of the previous year, and exceeding the targets set:
 - For initial assessments, Q4 performance was maintained at a similar level to Q3, resulting in a year end rate of 65.9% completed within 10 days (45.4% achieved in 2010~11).
 - For core assessments, 69.7% completed within 35 days continued the improving trend over the year (50.6% in 2010~11).
 8. Although there was a gradual reduction over Q4 in the number of child protection (CP) plans (from 301 at the end of Q3 to 273 at the end of Q4), numbers were still relatively high compared to previous years. The cumulative impact of CP plan activity over the year has had some impact on performance.
 - For CP plans in place over two years, the year end rate of 4.2% (i.e. of 259 CP plans ceased during the year, 11 had been in place over 2 years) was above the 1.5% from the previous year and missed the 0% target.
 - However, the proportion of children becoming the subject of a CP plan for a second or subsequent time (within two years of the previous plan) was in line with target at 5.5% (i.e 18 such cases, from the 325 new CP plans agreed over the year).
 9. The continued high number of looked after children over the year (at highest ever levels over the 2011~12 period) has created some pressures in sustaining performance in placement stability.
 - Very good performance has been sustained in shorter term stability (i.e. less than 3 placements in the year), although the Q4 period saw a slight increase. The year end position of 7.9% (i.e of 341 children placed, 27 had three or more placements) is within target and a good improvement on the 11.9% of the previous year.
 - The measure of longer term stability (over two years in latest placement) has been more challenging over the year, although Q4 saw a good rate of improvement. The year end position of 56.6% (i.e of 76 children in care over 2.5 years, 43 have been in their latest placement for at least two years) is outside target and down slightly on the 60.8% of the previous year. National benchmarking data (not available until autumn 2012) will identify whether the local picture is mirrored in the national trend.
 10. Adoption - recent publication by the DfE of an Adoption Scorecard for all local authorities resulted in a meeting with DfE representatives to review our performance. The scorecards used data drawn from national statistical returns, for the 2009 to 2011 period, to compare aspects of the timeliness of the adoption process. Whilst we presented as an outlier with regard to the timescale for matching a child with adopters following the court order, analysis of the cases concerned illustrated:
 - the complexities associated with the family finding process (e.g for sibling groups; children with complex medical needs; older children; those with dual heritage);
 - the impact of court processes, sometimes after a placement order has been granted;

- the effectiveness of our processes in making good placement decisions, centred on the welfare of the child, with no breakdowns of children placed for adoption since 2005.

Following the meeting, the DfE have confirmed their satisfaction with our progress and with our analysis, with no causes for concern.

11. Case file audits are now an established part of quarterly performance arrangements, with the aim of monitoring the quality of social care casework practice. Review of audit findings has identified some examples of improving casework, but with some continuing themes where improvement is needed, particularly relating to case supervision arrangements; recording case chronologies; and gaps in planning and assessment documentation.
12. NEETs: despite the challenging economic context, good performance has been sustained in this area. It should be noted that the national measure has changed from the previous indicator covering 16-18 yr olds based on place of learning. It is now based upon residency (all Stockton young people irrespective of where they learn) and, significantly, has moved to cover the academic years Y12 to Y14 – i.e. the cohort to be tracked and supported now includes 19 year olds (an increase in the target cohort of around 1400).
 - Based on the 3 month average for November to January (the method used in the past for the annual figure), the Y12-Y14 rate was 10.3% and the 16-18 figure was 9.7%.
 - However, data for the end of March (reflecting fuller impact of the January Offer – see para 23 below) indicates a Y12-Y14 rate of 9.8% and a 16-18 rate of 8.6% - within the 9% target figure.
 - Taking into account also the ‘Not Known’ rate (i.e. those young people whose intentions are not yet known), Stockton-on-Tees performs very well – we continue to have the lowest Not Known rate in the Tees Valley; and the combined NEET / Not Known rate is better than the Tees Valley average and better than all but one of the Tees Valley local authorities.

Actions taken

13. Quality of childcare:

- The new Quality Improvement Programme for childcare providers, introduced during 2011~12, is being closely monitored to evaluate impact on the quality of childminders in particular. As outlined above, there is evidence that this programme is now being reflected in improved inspection outcomes.
- A Scrutiny Review on Quality of Childminders is being undertaken as part of the 2012~12 Scrutiny Programme.

14. Given the increasing numbers of CAF forms being recorded, consideration has been given to ways in which the impact of this activity might be evaluated. As a result, arrangements have been agreed for a multi-agency audit process in order to look at the quality of interventions being made through the CAF process and the outcomes being achieved. Results of this audit work will feed into future quarterly monitoring reports.

15. Case file audits:

- The use of thematic case file audits has been agreed where feedback indicates the value of looking at specific areas of practice. During the 2011~12 period, thematic audits were undertaken for Private Fostering cases; and for cases where there had been a second or subsequent child protection plan agreed for a child.
- For Q2 of 2012~13 it is intended to focus on more recent casework (i.e. the last six months of casework for the sampled cases) in order to inform a view about the impact of case file

audits on current practice.

- An annual review of learning from case file audits is to be undertaken in conjunction with all social care staff.
16. In conjunction with partners in the Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board, there has been some review of our wider approaches to quality assurance of practice and its impact on families. In particular, consideration has been given to ways in which the views of families / carers, who have been receiving services to safeguard children, are gathered and evaluated. As a result, it has been agreed to introduce a new Exit Survey questionnaire for those parents or carers who have been in receipt of services to obtain their feedback about the support provided and the difference it has made to them. This will be introduced during the July / August period 2012 and will inform future monitoring reports.
 17. One of our two new Children's homes has been opened; the other is ready for opening, awaiting final approval from Ofsted. These homes will provide more local capacity for addressing the placement needs of looked after children.
 18. There have been positive outcomes to date from the 'Put yourself in the Picture' Fostering and Adoption campaign; three prospective foster carers and one prospective adopter undergoing assessment; more potential foster carers ready to start assessment.
 19. Analysis of long term placement stability for LAC (see 8 above) has taken place through the Children's Social Care Performance Clinic; this indicates that some of the placement moves, although they impact adversely on the way performance is measured, are in fact planned moves in to other forms of permanency e.g. special guardianships, residence orders or returning to live with parents or relatives.
 20. Linked to the above issue, internal monitoring of permanency arrangements over the year, and findings from some regional benchmarking work concerning placement of children, it has been agreed to undertake some further work around our approach to permanency (whilst this will include adoption, it will take a broader look than the areas covered by the DfE meeting discussed in point 9 above). As part of the new Sector Led Improvement arrangements, we are considering arrangements for some form of peer challenge to assist us in this area.
 21. Recent EIT Reviews will deliver changes in structures and service delivery aimed at addressing further improvements in the quality of services and provision.
 - The EIT Review of Children's Social Care (to be implemented from early September 2012) will create additional capacity within the Child Placement Team, as well as establishing new Permanence Teams.
 - The EIG Review (Early Years Services) has created a new model for delivery of Children's Centres aimed at ensuring provision is targeted more effectively at those families most in need; and has strengthened arrangements for monitoring the quality of Early Years and Children Centre provision.
 22. A project is underway exploring the possibility of establishing a 52 week residential school, in partnership with a provider, based at the former King Edwin School site.
 23. The NEETs agenda continues to be overseen by the 14-19 Partnership Board, through the Full Participation Plan, to ensure that all partners are working collaboratively to improve progression, transition and retention of learners; and to implement the new RPA (Raising Participation Age) requirements. Implementation of the 'January Offer' this year has had a positive impact on the NEETs position; however, sustainability of this approach may be challenging due to the resources required for tracking, follow-up and support of the young people at this stage.
 24. The Attendance and Exclusion Team continues to work in close partnership with schools to

sustain good attendance levels and target resources and intervention to those schools currently with attendance/ persistent absence (PA) below national averages. The next published attendance figures for the Autumn term of the current school year (2011~12) are expected to be released by the DFE on 14th June. Local, unconfirmed data for Stockton-on-Tees shows an improvement in each secondary school's attendance when compared with the Autumn term 10~11 and an improvement in PA in the majority of schools.

Customer perception/ satisfaction

25. There is no additional information to report for Q4 in this section.

Risk

26. There has been no significant change to the risk register arising from review of progress at this Q4 stage.

Finance

27. The year end budget position reflects the issues that have impacted on performance, in terms of demand on social care services and associated placement pressures.
28. Placement costs continue to be a significant pressure, particularly external agency residential placements, and some pressures also in relation to supported lodgings, special guardianships and kinship placements.
29. Foster care placement costs eased a little by the year end. The number of IFA (Independent Fostering Agency) placements increased to over 100 during the year, falling back to 91 by the year end (81 at the beginning of the year). In-house foster care placements reduced slightly over the year. The proportion of foster allowances spent on IFAs as opposed to in-house care remained at 64% / 36% for most of the year.
30. Increased court activity, linked to LA numbers, remains a concern although the projected year end variance has reduced since the previous quarter.
31. Increasing requirements for family contact continue to place significant pressure on the Contact Service budget.
32. The budget continues to be monitored closely; pressures have been managed in CESC from within year variances.