

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Performance Summary – Quarter 4

Reasons for the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with information and performance data in respect of Quarter 4 2015-16 to enable the Committee to:
 - a. Understand the factors that impact on outcomes for children in need and looked after children.
 - b. Consider opportunities for improving outcomes for children in need and looked after children.
2. This is the third attempt at a more strategic approach to reporting to Committee. It will be used as the basis for developing future reports that will give Members an understanding of cross cutting issues relating to looked after children both within the Council and wider partnerships.
3. The Quarter 4 report covers the period from 1st January 2016 to 31st March 2016.

Overview of Performance

4. While there has been some continued progress in Quarter 4, there has also been slippage in some areas in the context of increasing referrals and overall caseload numbers.
5. Work to progress the Children's Services business plan has continued and key areas of progress include:

- a. **Early Help Strategy** - the Strategy was launched during Quarter 3 and is being implemented. The following developments have been made during the quarter:
 - o Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) pilot progressing; Family Plan template finalised; JAFF Training DVD commissioned to assist practitioners undertake the assessment.
 - o Review of Family Intervention Support Service (FISS) capacity being undertaken following ongoing success of rapid response project.
 - o Adolescent Resource Centre – premises secured, post creation commenced; model for psychology input agreed with Health.

 - b. **Gateway Database** - single gateway for young people aged 16 or above to access direct housing, advice and support went live in Quarter 3. The Gateway has been a very positive development for young people needing to access accommodation and for the staff supporting them to do so. The process is very accessible and has reduced the anxiety for young people. It has strengthened relationships across the Directorates and is enabling the Looked After Children Service to respond to the requirements of young people and to work together to develop appropriate resources that meet need.

 - c. **Remodelling of Children's Services** - meetings are underway with a Signs of Safety training provider to plan the delivery of training. The Risk Assessment Framework has been agreed and will be implemented in Quarter 1 2016-17. Evaluation of OM roles has been completed and discussions with Trade Unions are underway prior to proceeding with the re-structure. Subject to agreement being reached with Trade Unions, it is anticipated that OM appointments will be completed by end of Quarter 1 2016-17.
6. Designated teacher forums have taken place termly and the meetings have given the opportunity for schools to share positive practice that they have put in place in their schools. We have also incorporated the foster carer's voice and care leaver's voice into each meeting. Training on the use of Lego to express feelings and improve wellbeing has also been made available to designated

teachers. We continue to work with designated teachers across our Consortium (Cardiff, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan) to share good practice. We have had joint meetings with social workers and education staff to improve relationships and understanding of each other's work.

7. A large proportion of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) 2015/16 was delegated to schools to support the education and inclusion of looked after children. Many schools have used the money in creative ways to provide a nurturing space for looked after children and other vulnerable children in their school. Rumney Primary, who have the most looked after children in the primary phase, built a kitchen so that developing emotional wellbeing can go alongside fun practical learning. Many schools have purchased Lego kits that are being used to enable children to express their feelings and deal with some of their emotional issues. There will be new arrangements for the distribution of the grant in 2016/17 overseen by the consortium. These are yet to be finalised.
8. A "virtual school" data tracking system for all looked after children is in place and provides a profile of every looked after child which includes end of Key Stage attainment data, attendance and exclusions. The profile now includes national test scores that are available in the system. Teacher assessment is now being collected from schools and is being incorporated onto the tracker. Challenge advisers are being updated regularly with information on the looked after children in their schools and are challenging schools to ensure progress being made is at least adequate. Team Around the School meetings also ensure that looked after pupils are discussed and any concerns raised with the Looked After Education team. There has been joint Governor training by Education and Children's Services. In the last session there were 28 Governors and the course was very well evaluated. All schools have been advised that they should have a designated Governor for looked after children.
9. Multi Agency Meetings (MAG) are continuing to improve in their focus and starting to lead to more focussed support. Discussion takes place on a half termly basis. At the June meeting there will be representation from the Child Health and Disability team (Children's Services) and from the Education

casework team. This will ensure that issues with the education of some of our most complex looked after children will be dealt with more effectively. The virtual tracking system is invaluable in providing up to date information to support meaningful discussion in the meetings.

10. There has been some slippage in progress against some of the milestones in the Children's Services Plan relating to:

- a. **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy** - the Cardiff Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy was approved by the Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Children Board in its role as the statutory body to which all agencies are accountable and this has provided the basis for Directorate and partner activity both in developing a strategic response to CSE and in ensuring effective operational interventions when necessary. More broadly the Directorate has been working very actively with South Wales Police as the key lead agency in relation to CSE overall and this strong local relationship in Cardiff is reflected both in the Strategy and in joint operations on the ground. A full programme of training has been planned for partner agencies and other groups, and awareness raising sessions are underway. A briefing to informal Cabinet is being arranged in the near future which will demonstrate significant progress over the last 12 months.

- b. **Implementation of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** - governance arrangements, operating model, staff composition, ICT infrastructure and accommodation (Cardiff Bay Police Station) agreed. Information sharing protocol under development. Vetting process for staff almost complete. Process mapping for referral pathways completed. On target for launch at the end of Quarter 1 2016-17.

- c. **Work with Education to improve educational outcomes for looked after children and care leavers** - following concerns raised in Quarter 2, and the introduction of information for managers to enable proactive monitoring of PEPs, there are some signs of improvement at the time of writing. Operational Managers for relevant services are continuing to re-

enforce the need to ensure that staff give high priority to completing the PEP when children become looked after.

- d. **Improving the quality of referrals** - the review of the Multi-Agency Referral Form planned for Quarter 2 was integrated with work being undertaken in relation to the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act. Required amendments have been made and the form is to be agreed collectively by colleagues in Education, Probation, Police and Health in readiness for use in 2016-17.

- e. **Safeguarding monitoring requirements** - work on the development of a suite of performance measures and reporting mechanisms that cover the broad range of work undertaken by the safeguarding and review unit has been undertaken and it is anticipated that this work will be concluded in Quarter 1 2016-17.

- f. **YOS** - progress in relation to YOS governance has been made and plans are in place to address membership, contents of meetings, presentation of performance information and financial information which will accord with recommendations made by the Police and Crime Commissioner's commissioned report and the YOS inspection report. YOS Management Board to facilitate workshops to address governance issues. Achievement of the planned YOS restructure has been deferred to 2016-17.

- g. **Corporate Parenting Strategy** - will be considered by Cabinet in Quarter 1 and the launch will follow shortly after.

- h. **Re-commissioning of the Supervised Contact Service** - contract awarded – service to be implemented in Quarter 1 2016-17.

- i. **Enhanced Fostering Scheme** - plan in place to address financial implications. Engagement with alternative provider and three promising models proposed (currently being considered by Children's Management Team). Work undertaken with Legal and Procurement to terminate

current contract and put in place a new contract for an individual placement for the one young person who was placed within the scheme and remains in placement.

- j. **Welsh bilingual service** - operational pressures have made the completion of the Linguistic Assessments more difficult. 21 assessments have been returned to date and reminders issued regarding the outstanding assessments.

- k. **Savings** - the outturn position for Children's Services shows a reported overspend of £2.013m. The overspend reflects ongoing pressure on the budget for external placements. This reflects an increase in the proportion of children presenting extremely complex challenges who need externally purchased placements with very high support ratios. There is also a significant shortfall (£1.2m) against the £2.96m savings target set for the service as part of the 2015-16 budget (and unachieved savings brought forward from 2014-15) which is attributable principally to the failure of a provider to deliver services in support of a new Payment by Results initiative. Nevertheless, there has been a continued focus on returning children placed in high cost out of area placements to Cardiff that was successful in returning 7 children to Cardiff in 2015-16 at an estimated saving of £316,000.

- l. **Quality Assurance Framework** - a Quality Assurance Officer has been appointed and the implementation of the Framework is planned for Quarter 1 2016-17.

Detailed Commentary – Quarter 4 2015-16

11. The number of children who were looked after at 31st March 2016 (not including those children being looked after as part of a respite care arrangement) was 644 compared with 625 at 31st December 2015 (CS LAC 3e). This represents a rate of 8.8 children per 1,000 in Cardiff, which is lower than the all Wales rate of 9.1 per 1,000 as at 31st March 2014.

12. Initial care plans were in place prior to children becoming looked after in 88.7% (63 / 71) of cases during Quarter 4, compared with 78.1% (50 / 64) in Quarter 3 (SCC/001a). Performance against this indicator improved during the quarter and is now above the threshold for manager intervention.
13. 88.1% (37 / 42) of permanence plans were in place by second looked after review in Quarter 4, compared with 96.3% (52 / 54) in Quarter 3 (SCC/001b).
14. 72.0% (363 / 504) of looked after children were placed with independent sector providers at the end of Quarter 4 (CS LAC 44), an increase from 70.0% (340 / 486) in Quarter 3. The number of children placed in independent sector residential placements has reduced to 50 from 55 at the end of Quarter 3.
15. 62.5% (315 / 504) of children in regulated placements were placed in Cardiff at the end of Quarter 4 compared with 60.9% (296 / 486) at the end of Quarter 3 (CS LAC 58). A further 83 children placed outside Cardiff were within 20 miles of their home address. 3 of the children not placed in Cardiff are placed with relative carers. For some children placement outside the authority is in their best interests, examples include children placed with family members who live outside Cardiff, children placed in specialist placements and some children who are placed in areas that are closer to their home address than some parts of the city.
16. 90.6% (386 / 426) of statutory reviews for looked after children were held within prescribed timescales in Quarter 4 compared with 95.9% (397 / 414) in Quarter 3 (SCC/021). 91.1% (388 / 426) of statutory visits were held in accordance with regulations in Quarter 4 showing an increase from 85.3% (353 / 414) in Quarter 3 (SCC/025 – PAM).
17. 99.8% (631 / 632) looked after children were allocated to a social worker at 31st March 2016. The one case that was not has since been allocated.
18. As at 31st March 2016, 50 children were in external residential placements. Children's Services were solely responsible for funding 23 of these placements with the remaining 27 receiving contributions from Education, Health, or both.

The average weekly cost per child was £3,464, although this ranged from £2,245 to £6,144. Contributions from Education range from 5% to 31% and Health range from 2% to 50% of the weekly cost - the percentage of the contribution is based upon factors such as how much the provider charges for education and therapy costs, the number of weeks in the school terms, the period of therapy, continuing health care needs and whether the child is statemented.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

20. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- Consider the contents of the report and report any comments to the Cabinet Member.

TONY YOUNG

Director of Social Services

13th July 2016