

**Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Performance Summary – Quarter 3
2016-17**

Reasons for the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with information and performance data in respect of Quarter 3 2016-17 to enable the Committee to:
 - a. Understand the factors that impact on outcomes for looked after children.
 - b. Consider opportunities for improving outcomes for looked after children.
2. This is the latest 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 3 report covers the period from 1st October 2016 to 31st December 2016.
4. The performance report attached at **Appendix A** has been constructed to highlight the progress made in delivering the key objectives, associated performance indicators, and commentaries that help to identify progress, issues and actions planned where the trend in performance is falling. To make the information in the performance report clearer, each indicator is accompanied by an arrow, and in some cases, a happy, indifferent or sad face.
5. For your information, these symbols represent the following:

- The face symbol shows whether performance is likely, unlikely to, or may meet the target set for the year.
 - The arrow direction shows whether performance has declined, has been sustained or improved when compared with an appropriate previous period.
6. The new Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 that came into force on 6th April 2016 provides the legal framework for improving the wellbeing of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. The Council is working on the implementation of the Act and the associated National Outcomes Framework during 2016-17.

Overview of Quarter 3 Performance

7. Performance during Quarter 3 is mixed with improvements in some key areas, but some declines in other areas. For example, performance in relation to timeliness of statutory visits to looked after children increased again from 95% to 96%. This is a notable improvement on the 2015-16 annual outturn figure of 87%. The percentage of social worker vacancies reduced slightly from 25% to 23%. Performance in relation to timeliness of initial and review child protection conferences remains good despite the decline from 97% to 89% and 100% to 97% respectively. In relation to initial child protection conferences, 7 conferences for 3 sibling groups were late in December. 2 were rescheduled to enable the parents / children to attend and the other was due to a delay in requesting the conference. Performance was 100% for October and November. In relation to review child protection conferences, 3 conferences were late during the quarter for a sibling group for whom the Court has instructed that no further conferences should be held. A further conference in relation to a sibling group of 4 was late in November as it had to be rescheduled. All late conferences that can be held, have since been held.

8. Work to progress the Directorate's commitments in the Corporate Plan has continued and key areas of progress include:

- a. **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy** – has enabled significant progress to be achieved in ensuring that children and young people are protected from CSE. The strategy has impacted as follows:
 - Drawn all key partners together with a common objective and action plan.
 - Enabled an audit and analysis of service effectiveness.
 - Drawn more effectively on the voices of children and their families.
 - Promoted city wide awareness raising in the night economy.

- b. **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** - Threshold meetings held weekly to quality assure referrals and decision making. Remedial actions are identified and addressed by the relevant agency as appropriate.

- c. **Corporate Parenting Strategy** –
 - During the quarter, 2 young people attended the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee for the first time and made a positive contribution to the meeting. Further consideration is being given to how the Committee can formally engage young people on an ongoing basis.
 - Between March and December 2016, 47 families have been supported and family breakdown has been prevented for 93 children by the Safe Families for Children initiative; just one child has been accommodated. This is a new prevention service that works with Children's Services to link families in need with local volunteers who can offer them help and support through a crisis.
 - Between April and December 2016, 57 children from 26 families have received services from the preventative Family Group Conferences initiative. Accommodation as a result of family breakdown has been avoided for 9 of these children with an estimated cost saving of £72k. Family Group Conferencing utilises

the strengths of family / friends to make their own plan to support and safeguard the children.

- The number of children supported by the Looked After Children traineeship scheme is currently 5 (with a further 2 working with the tutor), and an additional 7 apprentices within the Council.

d. **Specialist training regarding the Social Services and Wellbeing**

(Wales) Act 2014 – From April to September a total of 1,071 attendees across Cardiff and the Vale have received Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 training at an appropriate level. Changes in practice due to the implementation of the Act are becoming evident across teams in the region, however it is a long process and it is too soon to measure the impact of these changes.

9. There has been some slippage in progress against some of the milestones in the Corporate Plan relating to:

- a. **Recruitment and retention of children’s social workers** - The percentage of social worker vacancies in Children’s Services has reduced slightly during the quarter to 23.3% (from 24.8% in Quarter 2) and recruitment initiatives are ongoing. Vacancies rates have not reduced further due to internal promotions and transfers. Job creation has commenced in relation to the pool of additional social workers and it is anticipated that 6 social work posts will be filled in Quarter 1 2017-18. As a result of work to improve recruitment and retention, a more stable workforce across the service is emerging and except where essential maternity cover is required, there is less reliability on agency staff. There are some good examples of staff achieving promotional appointments, thereby supporting career development and staff retention.
- b. **Effectiveness of Transition** - A successful £2.54 million Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) bid is now supporting the new “Disability Futures Programme” to transform services for disabled children and learning disabled adults with complex needs. This has included the creation of

two transition worker posts in the Adult Learning Disabilities team to work within the complex needs service supporting young adults from the age of 16.

10. In relation to the Directorate Plan, there has been progress in relation to:

- a. **Early Help Strategy** – The Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) pilot is ongoing and subject to regular monitoring and review. The first supervision session for staff involved in the pilot was held and was led by a senior practitioner within the Team Around the Family (TAF) team. Supervision takes the form of a practice exchange, providing an opportunity for practitioners who are using the JAFF to discuss their experience and raise any issues that they are encountering. Further advice and guidance is given in response to issues raised.
- b. **New model for the delivery of children’s social services** - Progress with Signs of Safety Project Plan continues – training is ongoing; engagement with Team Managers, Principal Social Workers and lead officers from partner agencies has been successfully undertaken and engagement sessions with front line staff will commence in Quarter 4.
- c. **When I Am Ready Scheme** - Training sessions continue to be held and the rolling programme of awareness has been completed. Recruitment of a When I Am Ready Support Worker is underway and it is anticipated that the Support Worker will be in post in Quarter 4.
- d. **Remodelling of services for disabled children, young people and young adults** – Progress includes:
 - Work to review and monitor the pilot services continues.
 - Cardiff Disability Index continues to deliver alongside the Vale Disability Index to create a regional approach. The number registered since the Index became active in September 2016 is 90. The Index will be formally launched on 17th March 2017.
 - New service specification for integrated respite has been drafted - consultation with families and providers will take place in Quarter 4.

- Funding secured towards the development of a regional Integrated Autism Service.
- e. **Regional Workforce Development Partnership** – Website demonstration took place at the Regional Workforce Board and was endorsed.
- f. **Health and wellbeing of the Social Services workforce** – Flexitime was rolled out across the Directorate from the 1st September in line with the Council’s ‘Work Life Balance’ Policy. The Chief Executive together with Director of Social Services and other senior managers met with staff to update them on key areas of progress at a corporate level.
- g. **Agile / Mobile Working Strategy** – Approximately 550 Social Services staff have been mobilised through the Agile Mobile Working project. Positive feedback from a survey undertaken of Phase 1 staff included: *“More time to complete recordings and paperwork = less stress”* and *“This has definitely had an effect on people’s health & wellbeing which in turn increases productivity and performance”*.
- h. **Strategic Approach to Commissioning** - Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board established to meet the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 requirements. This includes a project to develop key joint commissioning strategies with the University Health Board and Vale of Glamorgan Council. Data collation across the region is continuing to inform a Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Integrated Market Position Statement. This will also be informed by the Population Needs Assessment which is due for completion in Quarter 4.
- i. **Collaborative working** – Cabinet paper completed seeking agreement to progress the development of a detailed operational model for a Regional Social Care Workforce Development Training Unit with Cardiff taking the lead on progressing the developments.

- j. **Benchmarking** – Available all Wales performance indicators for 2015-16 were identified and included in relevant target setting exercises for 2017-18.

11. There has also been some slippage in progress against some of the milestones in the Directorate Plan relating to:

- a. **Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC)** – Staff started taking up post during the quarter and recruitment to remaining positions is ongoing. The site has been secured, the final plan for the building has been agreed and a planning application is in development.
- b. **Joint working protocol between the Health Service and Children’s Services** – A psychologist continues to be available to social workers with consultations being held on a ‘surgery’ basis. This continues to have a positive impact but as it is limited to advice and guidance, it means that costs for alternative therapy continue to rise.
- c. **Social Services Workforce Strategy** – work has commenced on the development of a Social Worker Traineeship Scheme within the Directorate.
- d. **Bilingual Services** - The Directorate continues to work towards increasing capacity to deliver bilingual services as there is a current lack of capacity in the teams that is reflected in the small number of Welsh speakers Council wide. Staff are encouraged to enrol on Welsh language lessons and use any existing Welsh that they have. Increasing the number of Welsh speakers is proving difficult under the current recruitment process and it is hoped that Linguistic Assessments will be integrated into the Human Resources recruitment process in order to begin making a difference. To date only one post has been advertised as Welsh essential and, unfortunately, no applications were received.
- e. **Budget and savings proposals** – The Month 8 (November) monitoring position for Social Services shows an overspend of £5.741m against a

budget of £146.352m. This is an increase of £160,000 compared to the position for October 2016. The overspend of £3.056m reflects a savings shortfall of £1.507m plus significant projected cost growth (£1.3m) in relation to external fostering. Fostering placements increased by 30 in the first 8 months of 2016-17, a reflection of the overall growth in the number of looked after children (+51) in the same period. There has also been cost growth in relation to new residential placements (after offsetting savings in relation to the return of children in out of county placements is taken into account). The position also reflects overspends in support costs for care leavers and external legal costs, reflecting the ongoing high level of expenditure in these areas. The ongoing use of agency staff is also impacting on staffing budgets in certain areas such as Safeguarding and Looked After Children 14+, though the position should improve if agency numbers reduce, as anticipated, in the remainder of the year.

- f. **Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)** – funding has been identified for a full-time Quality Assurance Officer post across the Directorate. The recruitment process is underway in anticipation of the post being taken up in Quarter 1 2017-18. Case management audits continue to be undertaken (although numbers are low). An analysis of the audits and identification of emerging themes is considered by the Children’s Management Team on a quarterly basis. Themes emerging from complaints are also considered on a quarterly basis and presented to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

Progress in relation to the Education of Looked After Children

- 12. Seven schools in Cardiff have started action research under the ‘Promoting the Achievement of Looked After Children’ programme. This is overseen by University College London. The outcomes of this research project will be shared with other schools in the Local Authority and Consortium. The aim is to establish evidence of good practice to improve the achievement and attainment of looked after children.

13. The majority of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) for 2016-17 has been given directly to schools via the Consortium (Cardiff, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan). This decision has implications for the small team supporting schools in Cardiff as some posts were funded from the grant. As a result, the Looked After Education team (which currently consists of an Achievement Leader and a Looked After Children's Education Co-ordinator) are struggling to meet demand. There are now 690 looked after children, many of whom have complex education needs and are educated outside Cardiff. Discussions with the Consortium and Cardiff schools are required to ensure some of the Pupil Deprivation Grant is retained centrally to undertake non statutory work with Looked After Children to enhance their provision.

14. The Achievement Leader and Looked After Education team are having pupil progress meetings to discuss pupils that appear to be underachieving and to ensure that the school puts in additional support and intervention.

15. Multi-agency meetings are far more focussed and are half termly. The Looked After Education team are also attending social worker team meetings to ensure good communication and timely intervention where there are concerns from either side.

16. The end of year report was presented to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee in November and demonstrated improvements at each key stage.

Detailed Commentary – Quarter 3 2016-17

17. The number of children who were looked after at 31st December 2016 (not including those children being looked after as part of a respite care arrangement) was 690 compared with 701 at 30th September 2016 (CS LAC 3e). This represents a rate of 9.4 children per 1,000 in Cardiff, which is above the all Wales rate of 8.8 per 1,000 as at 31st March 2015.

18. The percentage of children supported to remain living within their family (SSWB 25) was 56.6% (899 / 1,589) compared with 57.3% (942 / 1,643) in Quarter 2.

Of the 1,589 children with a Care and Support Plan at 31st December 2016, 899 were being supported to live at home (i.e. were not being looked after).

19. The percentage of looked after children returned home from care during the year (SSWB 26) was 9.9% compared with 6.2% in Quarter 2. Of the 893 children who have been looked after during the year to date, 88 have returned home. This PI is cumulative, and performance will improve as we progress throughout the year.
20. The latter two PIs are a welcome measure of the effectiveness of the service in supporting children and young people within their families.
21. 73.8% (386 / 523) of looked after children were placed with agency providers at the end of Quarter 3 (CS LAC 44), stable from 74.0% (388 / 524) in Quarter 2. The number of children placed in agency residential placements has reduced to 47 from 50 at the end of Quarter 2.
22. 61.6% (322 / 523) of children in regulated placements were placed in Cardiff at the end of Quarter 3 compared with 60.9% (319 / 524) at the end of Quarter 2 (CS LAC 58). A further 85 children placed outside Cardiff were within 20 miles of their home address. 8 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 children who are placed in areas that are closer to their home address than some parts of the city.
23. 94.6% (454 / 480) of statutory reviews for looked after children were held within prescribed timescales in Quarter 3, an improvement from 93.8% (499 / 532) in Quarter 2 (SCC/021). Of the 26 reviews that were not held on time, 14 were held within a week, 5 within 2 weeks, 6 within 4 weeks and 1 at 5 weeks. All late reviews have since been held. 96.3% (462 / 480) of statutory visits were held in accordance with regulations in Quarter 3 showing a continued increase from 95.3% (507 / 532) in Quarter 2 (SCC/025).

24. All looked after children were allocated to a social worker at 31st December 2016.

25. As at 31st December 2016, 47 children were in external residential placements. Children's Services were solely responsible for funding 29 of these placements with the remaining 18 receiving contributions from Education, Health, or both. The average weekly cost per child was £3,393, although this ranged from £1,800 to £5,300. Contributions from Education range from 4% to 31% and Health range from 1% to 16% 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

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

Legal Implications

27. 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

24th February 2017