

**Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Performance Summary – Quarter 3**

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**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 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 second 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 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

**Overview of Performance**

4. Quarter 2 was a particularly strong quarter for Children's Services and while there has been progress in Quarter 3, there has also been slippage in some areas.
5. Work to progress the Children's Services business plan has continued and key areas of progress include:

- a. Implementation of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - there has been significant progress during Quarter 3 including:
  - Project Board / Team established and Project Brief signed off.
  - Governance arrangements agreed; project plan being implemented.
  - MASH accommodation agreed as Cardiff Bay Police Station.
  - Information Sharing Protocol development underway.
  - Operating model agreed.
  - Staff composition agreed for MASH (met with Trade Unions).
  - Vetting process for staff commenced.
  - ICT infrastructure agreed.
  - Information sharing platform / IT solution developments are in process.
- b. Early Help Strategy - launched during Quarter 3 and is being implemented. The Prevention & Partnership Improvement Project Manager is in post and the following developments made:
  - A pilot of the Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) has commenced which will shape the future JAFF and Family Plan.
  - The Rapid Response pilot was reviewed with a decision to continue the service and expand capacity.
  - Work has commenced with Strategic Estates to identify accommodation for the Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC).
  - Questionnaire has been developed for a market sounding exercise on the respite care element of the ARC.
- c. Single gateway for young people aged 16 or above to access direct housing, advice and support - went live in Quarter 3, the impact of which will be monitored in Quarter 4.
- d. Remodelling of Children's Services - decision taken to work with families adopting a Restorative Approach which is consistent with our partners who work within early intervention and prevention services, but to compliment this approach with the Signs of Safety Framework. Proposed structure developed and OM roles are with Hay for evaluation. In relation to services for disabled children – the Change Manager is in post and the project documentation has been developed.

6. The operational plan developed by the Looked After Children Education team in partnership with the Central South Consortium (CSC) has been amended and updated and continues to focus on increasing the capacity and expertise in schools to support looked after children. The plan builds on existing good practice across the five local authorities (Cardiff, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan).
7. There are evaluative systems in place to inform these planning arrangements. A large proportion of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) is delegated to schools to support the education and inclusion of looked after children. The criteria for eligible spend ensures a targeted approach and the regional plan demonstrates how schools and local authorities are held to account for how they use the grant. Schools submit bids for the PDG funding and approximately £143,000 has been distributed to schools to focus on specific activities to improve their capacity to meet the needs of looked after children, especially their wellbeing and emotional needs. Schools have been asked to keep files with evidence of activities and impact on pupil outcomes.
8. A “virtual school” data tracking system for all looked after pupils is in place and provides a profile of every looked after child to include end of Key Stage attainment data, attendance and exclusions. The virtual school is being improved further to hold more detailed information - by April 2016 the profile for each child will include national test results and termly assessment data.
9. Further development of Multi Agency Meetings (MAG) and identification of underachievement / barriers to learning is planned. The intention is for MAGs to be more solution focussed and more focussed on targeting additional support more effectively. Discussion will take place on a termly basis and support / referral will be targeted appropriately. Schools will be fully involved in this process. Progress after additional input will be assessed and if necessary further intervention put in place until there is evidence that the child is back on track and making progress.
10. There has been some slippage in progress against some of the milestones in the Corporate Plan relating to the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy,

work with Education to improve educational outcomes for looked after children and care leavers and the Workforce Strategy. The CSE Strategy has been drafted in readiness for sign off by Cabinet in Quarter 4. An interim CSE manager and permanent CSE co-ordinator have been appointed and are in post. Once approved, the interim CSE manager will lead on the implementation of the CSE Strategy. The training needs analysis for Children's Services and partner agencies has been extended to include consideration of the volume of CSE cases, categories of risk and an analysis of perpetrators. This is to ensure that the training provision reflects the complexity of the issues. In relation to work with Education, following concerns raised in Quarter 2 regarding performance in relation to timeliness of Personal Education Plans for looked after children, information available in Quarter 3 shows no improvement to date. New arrangements have been established to provide Operational and Team Managers with information that enables them to proactively monitor PEPs. It is too early to say whether these new arrangements have resulted in improved performance. Work on the Children's Services Workforce Strategy is ongoing and is on target to be signed off and an implementation plan agreed in Quarter 4.

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

- a. Improving the quality of referrals - the review of the Multi-Agency Referral Form planned for Quarter 2 has been integrated with work being undertaken in relation to the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act. Consideration is being given to adopting the Cwm Taf form which takes account of the National Minimum Core Data Set.
- b. Safeguarding monitoring requirements - work on the development of a suite of performance measures and mechanisms for reporting continues and is due for completion early in Quarter 1 2016-17.
- c. YOS collaborative working - the absence of any certainty about the future of Local Authority boundaries until the recent publication of the Local Government (Wales) Bill has been an obstacle to progress. Added

to which, the Youth Offending Service (YOS) was subject to a comprehensive external inspection during Quarter 3. The Chief Executive and Police & Crime Commissioner commissioned a review of YOS governance which has now made recommendations for improvement. A refresh of the governance arrangements is now underway with the Chief Executive as Chair of the Management Board. Progress in relation to the merger will be considered in that context.

- d. Corporate Parenting Strategy - will be considered by Cabinet in Quarter 4 and the launch will follow shortly after.
- e. Re-commissioning of the Supervised Contact Service - evaluation completed and tender exercise undertaken – decision to award contract expected early in Quarter 4. Currently on target for revised launch date in Quarter 1 2016-17.
- f. Enhanced Fostering Scheme - following concerns raised in Quarter 2 regarding the capacity of the provider to deliver on its commitments, the decision was taken in Quarter 3 to end the contract due to a lack of suitable placements. The following actions are being taken as a result:
  - o Identification of alternative placements for young people to facilitate return to Cardiff.
  - o Review of future arrangements to meet the needs of this cohort.
  - o Review the financial impact arising from withdrawal of the scheme.
- g. Welsh bilingual service - operational pressures have made the completion of the Linguistic Assessments more difficult. Managers will focus on completing them in Quarter 4.
- h. Savings - the month 9 position for Childrens Services shows an overspend of £1.59m (3.4%) against a budget of £46.6m. As in previous years, there is ongoing pressure on external commissioning budgets, notably in relation to fostering placements. The position also reflects current projections in relation to the savings targets set for the service in 2015/16. The latest position shows an anticipated shortfall of £1.1m in

relation to the savings target, although work is ongoing to reduce the number of high cost out of area placements.

- i. Quality Assurance Framework - milestones associated with the development of the Quality Assurance Framework have been revised due to capacity issues. A Quality Assurance Officer post has been established and the recruitment process is underway. Implementation of the Framework is planned for Quarter 1 2016-17.

### **Detailed Commentary – Quarter 3 2015-16**

12. The number of children who were looked after at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 (not including those children being looked after as part of a respite care arrangement) was 625 compared with 630 at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 (CS LAC 3e). This represents a rate of 8.6 children per 1,000 in Cardiff, which is lower than the all Wales rate of 9.1 per 1,000 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014
13. Initial care plans were in place prior to children becoming looked after in 77.8% (49 / 63) of cases during Quarter 3, compared with 81.3% (52 / 64) in Quarter 2 (SCC/001a). Performance against this indicator has reduced slightly in Quarter 3 and will be kept under close review by managers.
14. 74.1% (40 / 54) of permanence plans were in place by second looked after review in Quarter 23, compared with 96.6% (57 / 59) in Quarter 21 (SCC/001b). The reasons for this decrease are currently being investigated.
15. 70.3% (359 / 511) of looked after children were placed with independent sector providers at the end of Quarter 3 (CS LAC 44), showing no change from 70.3% (359 / 511) in Quarter 2. The number of children placed in independent sector residential placements remained stable at 55.
16. 60.9% (296 / 486) of children in regulated placements were placed in Cardiff at the end of Quarter 3 compared with 61.6% (315 / 511) at the end of Quarter 2 (CS LAC 58). A further 82 children placed outside Cardiff were within 20 miles of their home address. 2 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.

17. 95.9% (397 / 414) of statutory reviews for looked after children were held within prescribed timescales in Quarter 3 compared with 96.0% (458 / 477) in Quarter 2 (SCC/021). 85.3% (353 / 414) of statutory visits were held in accordance with regulations in Quarter 3 – showing no change from 85.3% (407 / 477) in Quarter 2 (SCC/025 – PAM).

18. All looked after children were allocated to a social worker at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

19. As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015, 55 children were in external residential placements. Children's Services were solely responsible for funding 29 of these placements with the remaining 26 receiving contributions from Education, Health, or both. The average weekly cost per child was £3,449, although this ranged from £1,900 to £6,144. Contributions from Education range from 5% to 33% 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**

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

### **Legal Implications**

21. 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.

**MARIE ROSENTHAL**

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**16<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

**TONY YOUNG**

**Director of Children's Services**