

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Children & Families Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 26 July 2011
Report of: Lorraine Butcher, Director of Children's Services
Subject/Title: Performance reporting : Year end 2010-11

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline an overall summary of performance and associated issues arising from the key performance indicators for Children & Family Services for 2009-10. The principle document referred to within this paper is the Children & Families Performance Scorecard (Appendix A) which has been shared with Scrutiny Committee several times previously. This format of recording and reporting performance is currently under review primarily due to the national changes in the National Indicator set. A revised format is currently being trialled as the adjustment to a new national reporting framework is confirmed.
- 1.2 The report gives details relating to 10 key performance indicators which have been identified as high risk through the ongoing monitoring of performance. The use of a 'Red Amber Green' RAG rating process provides an effective monitoring tool in evaluating the progress of service areas in addressing areas of potential underperformance. This report captures the key messages learnt over the year from the close analysis of these indicators and the direction of travel in terms of securing improvements in performance.
- 1.3 This report also makes reference to other key performance reports and documentation to highlight the mechanisms by which Children & Family Services have integrated performance reporting with key groups/stakeholders as well as within service planning procedures.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Children and Families 2010-11 performance paper be received and noted.
- 2.2 Children and Family Scrutiny acknowledge the work which has been undertaken in establishing an effective performance reporting system leading to improved outcomes for children and young people.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The reason for presenting this information is to provide an accurate analysis of Children & Families performance against key indicators across all service areas for 2010-11.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All wards will be affected.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 This quarterly reporting process provides performance data as required by corporate services in relation to agreed performance management processes. As changes are made to such policies and procedures for 2011-12 through the use of CorVu, Children & Family Services will work within this new framework to ensure performance is reported within policy expectations. .

7.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 Performance data has been used to shape Children & Family service needs and identify/match resources to meet demand based appropriate levels of need.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 None

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 The key risk relates to the accuracy of information to ensure that reporting is based upon validated data. Robust methods are in place to quality assure the accuracy of reported data at every level. Some data presented is projected data which is based upon returns from various sources, particularly schools. Such data helps to predict outcomes but comes with higher levels of uncertainty but remains useful to include for reporting trends.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The development of the Children & Families performance scorecard has been a key tool in establishing a monitoring regime which reports progress on a quarterly basis. It is important to recognise the journey which has been undertaken in that many indicators – principally those relating to schools and settings do not fit easily into a quarterly reporting structure. In addition, the accessibility to reliable data has proved a challenge for some indicators – access to some PCT data remains an issue and whilst there has been some progress through the agreed Data Sharing Protocol, the flow of data does remain an issue. Finally, some national indicators have to be challenged in terms of the value of collecting performance data which has limited application to the work of service teams. For example, services for disabled children are an elaborate quotient which provides very little evidence as to the actual quality and accessibility of services.

- 10.2 It is important to recognise that through the course of last year, several indicators became defunct due to the removal of the Tell us Survey – a national framework which provided feedback on the views of children and young people. An example of such an indicator is NI 50 Emotional Health of Children. Alternative methods of effectively coordinating the view of children and young people are currently being considered by the Children's Trust.
- 10.3 Out of the 82 indicators shown within the Performance Scorecard as shown within Appendix A, 10 have continued to remain high risk for the full year. Some of these high risks have retained a red rating to ensure that further work was undertaken to establish more detailed and accurate extraction of data (e.g. NI 68). Other indicators within the scorecard have changed their RAG rating during the year as performance trends have improved. This report captures the key findings within the identified 10 high risk indicators and gives a summary of the learning from detailed monitoring over the year.
- 10.4 The system used throughout the year has been that quarterly reporting has been presented to the Children & Families Senior Management Team for their approval and sign off. Remedial actions are agreed with service managers as required where performance issues/concerns have been raised. Exception reporting has been used throughout the year to address specific areas of concern.
- 10.5 Specifically for the safeguarding of children, the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has established its own performance reporting framework which provides both monthly as well as quarterly reporting processes. Monthly reporting is made available to the Principal Manager for Safeguarding with quarterly reporting to the Board.
- 10.6 The following information captures the key issues relating to the 10 high risks which have been reported throughout the year:

NI 68 – Contact and Referrals. Significant work has been undertaken on this indicator in two key areas. Firstly, as from December 2010, a revised service structure was put in place to provide a single point of contact into social care services through the re-structured Children's Assessment Team. The impact of this change is that all contacts and referrals are now acted upon by a dedicated team and in a consistent way. Secondly, significant work has been undertaken to identify the differences between contact only and those contacts which are deemed to be a referral (i.e. a request for a direct social care service) and therefore require specific action through the assessment process. Over the year, 6169 contact and referrals came into the Authority with 2389 initial assessments completed.

NI 71 – Children missing from home or care – The information which is used for this indicator is from Cheshire Police and relates to the number of incidents rather than actual numbers of children. A multi agency sub group has been set up to look in more detail at this indicator to be in a position to be able to review the qualitative data referring to the places children are running away from, the reasons as well as potential repeat cases.

NI 72 & 92 – Achievement at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – These indicators are examples of annual returns which cause issues in terms of being able to effectively monitor the impact of planned interventions within year. The EYFS phase of the education continuum was identified as an area of concern within the school stocktake process in October last year. One of the positive outcomes seen within the year has been the collection from schools of moderated tracking data which has allowed for detailed analysis of within year trends. The revisions in programmes such as ‘Making a Big Difference’ based upon this data has resulted in improved outcomes with early indications that both of these indicators have risen in the provisional results across all schools for 2010-11.

NI 59 & 60 – Initial and Core assessments carried within timescales - The establishment of the Children’s Assessment Team as from December 2010 has required a systematic embedding of new practices leading to a consistent approach to sign off by staff and managers based upon the quality of casework rather than specific timescales. This focus upon quality was recognised in the recent Announced inspection. Quarter 1 of 2011-12 has seen an improvement in trends for these indicators which we are confident will be sustained throughout this year.

Number of Children privately fostered – an annual return is completed outlining the number of reported private fostering arrangements reported to the Authority. Identifying the actual number of private fostering placements is very challenging and is also influenced by timescales – short term private fostering does not need to be reported to the Authority. Various campaigns have been undertaken to raise the profile for this vulnerable group and we will continue to closely monitor this area of the service.

NI 102 a&b – Achievement gap between children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and their peers – the Authority has undertaken a detailed project around this indicator which has involved over 50 schools. A range of action research projects have been established to tackle the narrowing of the attainment gap and we are confident that this summer’s results will start to see the impact of these initiatives. In addition, the 1:1 Tuition programme has, this year, had a real focus on pupils receiving FSM which we hope will also contribute to the narrowing of the gap based upon this summer’s results.

NI 117 – 16-18 year olds who are NEET – The significant changes during last year relating to the Connexions service will have had an impact on this indicator as will the changing economic climate in terms of increased pressures on employment opportunities. The overall monitoring of the programmes provided for those who are or are at risk of NEET show that many are short term in nature and do not provide sustainable outcomes. These issues are now being addressed as part of the revised monitoring framework with Connexions and a three year programme of European Social Funding targeted at reducing NEET should begin to have an impact on this key indicator.

- 10.7 Appendices B&C provide a summary from the Children’s Services performance profile which is updated on a regular basis based upon all Ofsted inspection outcomes from a wide range of institutions and services. This profile provides the performance outcomes which culminate in the overall judgement that

Cheshire East 'Performs Well'. Whilst one of these profiles does impact on 2011-12 performance, they illustrate that there have been further improvements in the profile for 2010-11 as illustrated in the reduction in red indicators.

- 10.8 The out turn from 2010-11 has significantly contributed to the detailed service planning process for 2011-12. There is in place a robust service plan for Children & Family services which is based upon key service priorities as identified through performance reporting. Appendix D provides a strategic overview of key service planning objectives and the essential links between activity and improving outcomes.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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