

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report

Date of Meeting: 28 January 2019

Report Title: Children and Families Performance Scorecard – Qtr 2, 2018-19

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jos Saunders, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report and the attached performance scorecard provide an overview of performance across the Children and Families Service for quarter 1 of 2018-19.

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1. Scrutiny is recommended to:
 - a. Note the contents of the report and scorecard; and
 - b. Scrutinise areas where expected levels of performance are not being met.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. One of the key areas of focus for the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to highlight areas of poor performance and to scrutinise the effectiveness of plans in place to improve services. Overview and Scrutiny has an important role to play in the performance management systems of the local authority. The Children and Families performance scorecard provides essential data, along with qualitative information, to measure the effectiveness of services within children's services. This report and scorecard will be provided to Scrutiny on a quarterly basis to enable the Committee to maintain an overview of performance across the Service.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Scrutiny may want to consider the performance of the Service more or less frequently.

5. Background

- 5.1. This quarterly report provides the Committee with an overview of performance across Children's Services. This report and scorecard relates to quarter 2 of 2018-19 (1st September – 31st December 2018).

- 5.2. The performance scorecard details the following:

- Measure – details of each performance measure
- Polarity – whether it is good to have the measure high or low
- Statistical neighbour average – gives a comparator against local authorities with similar characteristics to Cheshire East. Cheshire East's statistical neighbours in rank order are:
 - Cheshire West and Chester
 - Warwickshire
 - Central Bedfordshire
 - Warrington
 - Hampshire
 - North Yorkshire
 - East Riding of Yorkshire
 - Solihull
 - North Somerset
 - West Berkshire
- National average – gives a national comparator figure
- Target – this is either a national target, eg, adoption timeliness, or a local one set by the service to provide a 'good/outstanding' service
- Year end 2017-18 – enables Members to compare existing performance to that in the previous year
- Quarterly performance – enables Members to compare performance from quarter to quarter
- RAG – this is a rating of red, amber, green based on current performance against the expected level of performance
- Direction of travel – this provides the direction of travel this quarter and whether this is positively or negatively in an upward/downward trajectory or static
- Comments – this provides a general commentary on the information presented
- C&YP Plan Priority – links the measure to the relevant priority within the Children and Young People's Plan
- Corporate Priority – links the measure to the relevant priority within the Council's Corporate Plan

6. Performance Overview

- 6.1. The performance scorecard at Appendix 1 includes 104 separate measures covering all areas of the service. Some of these measures are non-performance related, eg those that relate to population cohorts. In total, 73 of these measures relate to performance and have been RAG rated. A breakdown summary is set out below:

Performance Measures	Red	Amber	Green	n/a	Total
This quarter	7	29	37	31	104

7. Red RAG rated performance

- 7.1. There continues to be some areas of performance that are RAG rated as red. Activity is underway in all these areas to address under-performance.
- 7.2. There was a dip in timeliness in quarter 2 in relation to the percentage of assessments completed within 45 days due to staffing pressures during the summer period. This coincided with the introduction of a new style of assessment aligned with Signs of safety. 32% of assessments were completed within 15 days where the cases either warranted quick closure with no further action or there were immediate safeguarding concerns which required quick intervention. Where cases required longer assessment, appropriate children in need plans were in place to support the family whilst ongoing investigation and analysis were taking place.
- 7.3. The percentage of initial child protection conference (ICPC) within 15 days of Section 47 enquiry (S47) is RAG rated red again in quarter 2 as the percentage remained the same as quarter 1 at 74%. In quarter 2 there were significant pressures on the social work management with vacancies, which led to a reduction in performance. This has now been addressed and we would expect to see an improvement in quarter 3. All children where there were delays outside the timescale had an interim plan agreed, so the risks were managed.
- 7.4. The number and rate of cared for children continue to be RAG rated red. There has been a national rise in the average rate of cared for children per 10,000 from 62 to 64 and the Northwest average has risen from 86 to 91. In quarter 2 Cheshire East has experienced a significant reduction in the rate of individuals entering the care system falling from 56 in Q1 to 34 in Q2 (a reduction of 39%). This is in part due to a focus on permanency planning at the earliest stages of social work intervention and may reflect early

indications of the success of Signs of Safety and the safety plans focussing on home and community based support.

- 7.5. The increase in the number of children missing from education (active cases 12 weeks or less) increased in quarter 2 up to the end October 2018. A new triage system and use of family support workers in place from September 2018 allows cases to be dealt with more quickly, so the rise in short term cases is linked to faster finding of children and re-engagement with education. Border checks carried out in Sept/Oct meant that when children were reported to have left England, this was quickly confirmed. Data was thoroughly checked and old cases identified which were quickly addressed. Weekly meetings are now in place to ensure that all cases are known and being progressed.
- 7.6. Similarly, the increase in the number of children who are electively home educated is a concern. Quarter 2 data relates to October 2018 data and includes 49 children that became home educated since the start of term. The Electively Home Education Consultant will make initial contact within 10 working days to offer support to any children whose parents have chosen to electively home educate them.
- 7.7. The timeliness of completing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) continues to be a significant issue. The actual performance has dipped because we are clearing older cases, which impact on the overall performance. Improvements have been made in securing advice from professionals/agencies in a more timely manner, but the ongoing difficulties in recruiting Educational Psychologists (EPs) is having an adverse effect. We have invested in Locum EPs and this is helping, pending the emerging restructure of the service and increased capacity. Improving timeliness and quality of plans is a priority of the SEND action plan and there are a range of actions within this underway to improve this indicator.

8. Performance Direction of Travel

- 8.1. Whilst it is important to look at the current performance around particular measures, it is equally important to look at the direction of travel and to RAG rate this in relation to performance, ie, whether this is improving (green), staying broadly the same (amber) or getting worse (red). A summary of the direction of travel of performance across the service is detailed overleaf:

Direction of Travel	Red	Amber	Green	n/a	Total
This quarter	7	31	42	24	104

9. Implications of the Recommendations

9.1. Legal Implications

9.1.1. There are a no direct legal implications.

9.2. Finance Implications

9.2.1. Although there are no direct financial implications related to this report, performance measures may be used as an indicator of where more or less funding is needed at a service level.

9.3. Equality Implications

9.3.1. Members may want to use the performance scorecard to ensure that services are targeted at more vulnerable children and young people.

9.4. Human Resources Implications

9.4.1. None.

9.5. Risk Management Implications

9.5.1. There are risks associated with some performance measures, eg increases in demand and timeliness of services.

9.6. Rural Communities Implications

9.6.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

9.7. Implications for Children & Young People

9.7.1. This performance scorecard sets out a range of measures that impact on services for children and young people and their families.

9.8. Public Health Implications

9.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

10. Ward Members Affected

10.1. The performance measures relate to all ward areas.

11. Consultation & Engagement

11.1. Not applicable.

12. Access to Information

12.1. The scorecard is attached at Appendix 1.

13. Contact Information

13.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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