

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting:	10 January 2022
Report Title:	Children and Families Performance Report Quarter 2 2021-22
Report of:	Deborah Woodcock, Director of Children's Services
Report Reference No:	CF/22/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All wards

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report sets out the performance for Children's Services for quarter 2 of 2021-22.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This report sets out the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on performance, and the arrangements that have been in place during this time and gives an overview of performance across the Children and Families service for quarter 2 of 2021-22

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. The Children and Families Committee is asked to:
- 3.2. Note the performance of children's services for quarter 2.
- 3.3. Provide support and challenge in relation to performance for children and young people.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. One of the key areas of focus for the Children and Families Committee is to review performance and scrutinise the effectiveness of services for children and young people.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. Not applicable.

6. Background

6.1. This quarterly report provides the Committee with an overview of performance across Children's Services. This report relates to quarter 2 of 2021-22 (1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021).

6.2. There still remains some ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and residual isolation/ social distancing guidelines, which include

- Contacts and referrals to the front door showing some unusual trends due to school closures which makes quarter on quarter analysis more complex. Quarter 2 is traditionally much lower due to school summer terms but it remains difficult to understand what are seasonal trends as opposed to the ongoing impact of bubble arrangements and isolation guidelines.
- Delivery of frontline services, especially in terms of face to face visiting and routine reviews, have been adapted to reflect the various isolation requirements to protect both workers and the families we work with.
- Attendance at Children's Centres and Youth Support, whilst initially impacted during the pandemic, are now being delivered within COVID safe guidelines and face to face services are being delivered with increased numbers attending.
- Work around Education and Health Care Plans – especially when assessing children in their "school environment" and "routine" has been increasingly complex and difficult.

6.3. Senior leaders and managers continue to remain sighted on service performance and impact on children and young people through the following:

- A core data set provided to CEMART which includes key measures for Children's Services
- A weekly social care and safeguarding data set from the beginning of February 2020 comparing core data sets with the same week in 2019/20. This has continued into quarter 2 2021-22.
- Weekly attendance at early years settings Department for Education (DfE) dashboard
- National local authority data set submitted to the DfE – originally on a fortnightly basis commencing in May 2020, but this reduced to monthly in Spring 2021.
- Daily dashboard data around school attendance with weekly national comparator data and summary.
- Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Power BI reporting platform that enables the service to have timely information on assessment timescales and reviews due enabling the service to prioritise case loads and requirements.
- A National SEND local authority data set submitted to the DfE on a monthly basis.

- 6.4.** This report contains the indicator set and summary commentary around any areas of concern together with highlighting any different provision/ support that has been put in place during this time.

Children's Social Care

Measure	Year end 2020/21	Quarter 4 2020/21	Quarter 1 2021/22	Quarter 2 2021/22
Number of referrals	2273	467	601	454
Percentage of repeat referrals	16%	17%	18%	15%
Percentage of assessments completed within 45 days	74%	74%	79%	68%
Percentage of children with a second or subsequent child protection (CP) plan (rolling yr)	27.8%	28%	27%	20%
Number of children in need	2082 (Cin census outturn)	1713	1739	1887
Number of children with a child protection plan	236	244	220	234
% of children on CP plans reviewed within timescales	93.1%	93%	93%	96%
Number of cared for children	518	517	527	519
% of cared for children reviewed within timescales	96%	99%	96%	99%
% of cared for children in internal foster care (including friends and family placements)	35%	35%	35%	34%
% of children living in external foster homes	28%	28%	22%	28%
% of children living in residential homes	8%	8%	7%	6%
% of cared for children placed over 20 miles from home address (Cheshire East and out of borough)	28%	28%	28%	27%
% of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	48%	51%	47%	48%
% of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation	98%	97%	97%	98%
Total number of children with a court endorsed plan of adoption (snapshot figure)	30	30	30	33
Number of children adopted (YTD)	26	26	3	5
Average caseload of social workers	19	19	20	19

- 6.5.** Compared to quarter 1 (Q1) there has been a significant decrease in referrals to social care, which is also substantially lower than the numbers seen in Q2 of 2020/21 at 676. It is difficult however to compare with last year as Q2 last year saw a relaxation of the more stringent COVID-19 isolation rules. Ongoing audit activity suggests that we are seeing appropriate contacts and referrals to the front door and the rate of conversion remains consistent.

- 6.6.** There has been a positive reduction in the re-referral rate in Q2 which is an indicator of sustained change in cases we have previously worked with. The year to date performance of 15% is also significantly better than the latest published North West position of 22.2% and National position of 22.7% (based on the 2020-21 released CIN census data). Re-referrals are regularly audited for any recurring themes.

- 6.7.** Although there was a reduction in the timeliness of assessments being completed within 45 days in Q2, audit activity indicates that this was not to the detriment of individuals being provided with support at an early stage. There was a proactive decision to focus on improved quality of assessment and management oversight which meant that some cases went slightly over the 45 days for formal sign off.
- 6.8.** There is a positive downward trend in the rolling year for the percentage of repeat child protection plans with the actual position for the half year of 2021-22 standing at 11%. Those returning within two years is even lower at only 5.5%. This again is an indicator of more timely and focused intervention with planning and support leading to lasting positive results for families.
- 6.9.** There has been a small reduction in the number of children in care at the end of quarter 2. There are a wide range of approaches being utilised with individuals on the edge of care to provide networks of support and enabling individuals to stay living within their family units.
- 6.10.** Number of adoptions continue to slowly increase with a further 17 individuals living in their adoption placements.

Education and Skills

Measure	Year end 2020/21	Quarter 4 2020/21	Quarter 1 2021/22	Quarter 2 2021/22
Percentage good or outstanding primary schools	92%	Not available	Not available	92%
Percentage good or outstanding secondary schools	80%	Not available	Not available	80%
Percentage good or outstanding special schools	60%	Not available	Not available	50%
Percentage attendance for primary pupils year to date	96%	96%	97%	Not reported for Sept
Percentage attendance for secondary pupils year to date	93%	93%	93%	Not reported for Sept
Percentage attendance for special school pupils year to date	83%	83%	90%	Not reported for Sept
Number of permanent exclusions from Cheshire East Schools (latest half term available)	5	5	6	Not reported for Sept
Current Number of pupils educated at home	457	457	509	435
Current number of children missing from education.	62	62	58	74
Percentage of Good/ Outstanding PEPs (reported termly)	82%	82%	89%	Not reported for Sept
Total number with an education, health and care plan (EHCP)	3013	3013	3142	3277
% of requests for Educational Psychologists (EP) advice completed within 6 weeks	59%	87%	98%	89%
Special Educational Needs – Education, Health and Care Plans completion within 20 weeks including exceptions (cumulative yr - NB Q4 represents new year - see comments at point 5.19)	37%	85%	86%	75%
Average number of weeks for EHC Plans to be issued (snap shot at quarter end to which it relates)	19.0	19.0	19.4	20.3
% EHCP annual review completed in timescales	67%	67%	58%	66%

- 6.11.** Whilst it appears that the percentage of special schools judged good or outstanding has reduced this is in fact because there is now an additional school which has not yet been inspected. The local authority now has six schools operating. Of the five that have been inspected 60% are good or outstanding.
- 6.12.** Q2 data is not available for attendance due to the fact that the bulk of the period is during the extended summer break. Attendance at secondary schools is further impacted in July with no year 11 or year 13 attendance following the exam period ending.
- 6.13.** Likewise exclusions data is not available as the latest half term data will relate to the first half of the autumn terms that doesn't end until late October. The exclusions data for Q1 relates to the half term ending July 2021.
- 6.14.** There are a small number of schools that are unable to report currently to the DfE and the Education Service remains in close contact with them to ensure that pupils are attending and any additional support required is identified.
- 6.15.** There has been a reduction in the number of electively home educated individuals (EHE). We implemented a multi-agency pre-deregistration meeting in September 2020, requesting schools to invite the child, parents, professionals involved with the child and local authority to meet to discuss reasons for de-registration and set our local authority expectations, ensuring parents were making an informed choice to electively home educate.
- 6.16.** Although there is an increase in the number of individuals missing from education this is not an immediate cause for concern as there is often an increase in the autumn term as we establish where families have moved away during the summer and not enrolled where expected, together with those who have elected private education. The team works closely with the families and schools concerned to establish where individuals have enrolled.
- 6.17.** Despite a small reduction, quarter 2 performance still demonstrates the success of the work that has been ongoing to increase the availability of Educational Psychologists (EP). We would always expect a small reduction in the summer term due to family availability with holidays and restricted school time to observe individuals in school and routine settings.
- 6.18.** The year end timeliness for Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans of 37% represents the outturn reported in January as part of the SEN2 statutory return to the DfE. Q2 performance of 75% therefore reflects the position from January – September 2021. The average time for completion of new plans increased slightly in Q2 but remains in line with national requirements.

- 6.19.** Timely reviews of EHC plans remains a priority and despite the increasing numbers of plans together with new requests there has been a pleasing improvement in the number completed in timescales.

Prevention and Early Help

Measure	Year end 2020/21	Quarter 4 2020/21	Quarter 1 2021/22	Quarter 2 2021/22
Current number of open Early Help Assessments/ plans (excluding short breaks)	1085	1085	1031	1105
% of all open Early Help Assessments led by Cheshire East Prevention service staff	69%	69%	65%	66%
% 0-2 yrs engaged at children centres (most vulnerable i.e. CIN/CP/LAC that have attended 3 or more times in the last 12 months)	23%	21%	20%	29%
% eligible children taking up 2 year old offer (termly figure only)	68%	68%	71%	71%
% children taking up 3 and 4 year old offer (termly figure only)	94%	94%	93%	93%
Number of Families meeting the Supporting People (previously family focus) criteria where outcomes have been successfully concluded (quarterly fig)	318 target achieved	74	87	129
Number of young people accessing the youth support service		872	1634	2,050
Number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	174	174	172	71
% of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	0.95%

- 6.20.** Despite the difficulties services are facing, compared to the same point last year we are supporting more families and young people with an early help assessment. This means that individuals are getting support as soon as possible and we can target help and equip individuals with tools and techniques before issues escalate. Longer term this will hopefully contribute to reduced numbers of individuals requiring specialist interventions and services.
- 6.21.** The number of early help assessments that are led by Cheshire East staff remains static despite the increased numbers with partners now increasingly able to undertake the lead where they are the most appropriate agency. This is in part due to schools being fully opened together with other partner agencies opening more face to face services.
- 6.22.** The take up of the 2, 3 and 4 year old offer reflects the summer position and an updated rate will only be available at the end of the autumn term. Enabling social interaction and group learning at a young age is crucial to development and ensuring that this being supported and provided by our teams and partners has remained a priority.
- 6.23.** The Supporting People Programme (formally family focus programme) has continued following a further 12 month extension to the programme

with a 2021/22 target of 332 payment by results. As at Q2 216 families had been successfully supported and as such we are well ahead in terms of delivering against target.

- 6.24.** Q2 continues to show a significant increase in the number of individuals receiving support from the youth service. This is primarily due to being able to open up more of the group sessions within the revised guidelines and as such a range of summer activities were well attended. Where virtual services have proved successful we will continue to offer a blended approach to maximise the support available.
- 6.25.** The NEET figure is extremely low as at the end of September which reflects the proactive work to keep our young people in education or support them into employment and training. There is always some movement in the autumn term as individuals decide their initial plans may not be the best fit for them personally and we will continue to work closely with all individuals to secure the best outcome.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

7.1.1. There are no direct legal implications.

7.2. Finance

7.2.1. Although there are no direct financial implications or changes to the MTFS as a result of this briefing paper, performance measures may be used as an indicator of where more or less funding is needed at a service level.

7.3. Policy

7.3.1. There are no direct policy implications.

7.4. Equality

7.4.1. Members may want to use the information from the performance indicators to ensure that services are targeted at more vulnerable children and young people.

7.5. Human Resources

7.5.1. There are no direct human resource implications.

7.6. Risk Management

7.6.1. There are risks associated with some performance measures, e.g. increases in demand and timeliness of services.

7.7. Rural Communities

7.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. Performance reports enable members to identify areas of good performance and areas for improvement in relation to children and young people, including cared for children.

7.9. Public Health

7.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

7.10. Climate Change

7.10.1. This report does not impact on climate change.

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None