

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Health &amp; Social Care Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>22 September 2015</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Children's Safeguarding Performance Data</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Assistant Director, Safeguarding &amp; Family Support</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Key Decision**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards Affected**

Countywide

## **Purpose**

To note the performance in relation to children's safeguarding for the month of June 2015, together with trend data over the previous 12 months.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT:**

- (a) the performance of Children's Safeguarding be reviewed;**
- (b) Comment on any other performance indicators which scrutiny would like to be included in future reports**

## **Alternative options**

- 1 There are no alternative options as this is an opportunity for scrutiny to review and challenge the performance of children's safeguarding

## **Reasons for recommendations**

- 2 To allow the committee to undertake effective scrutiny of the Council's statutory functions in relation to safeguarding for children in need.

## Key considerations

- 3 The attached report considers performance for the month of June 2015, together with trend data over the previous 12 months (appendix 1).
- 4 We believe the information being reported is more accurate than before and this is linked to the overall transformation of Frameworki, the social care case management system. This includes installing 19 case management and reporting upgrades to Frameworki since April 2014. This transformation project is part of the overarching children of Herefordshire's improvement and partnership programme (CHIPP) programme and, as at 30 June 2015, 70% of the work in the Frameworki project plan has been completed. However, whilst the work is being completed within project timescales, further improvements still need to be achieved by the project completion deadline of December 2015. We now have a much better understanding as to how the whole system is operating than we have had previously, and this has enabled us to drive up standards and performance.
- 5 The overall trend is that the system is working much more efficiently and meeting contemporary practice standards and statutory guidance than has been the case over the previous 14 months. We have also been successful in producing a range of more meaningful operational activity, performance information and management information reports. However, there are still further areas for attention in terms of improving our overall efficiency in meeting statutory expectations. Specific aspects which the committee are invited to consider in the report (appendix 1) are as detailed below:
- 6 Performance in relation to all contacts received by children's safeguarding being screened by a qualified practitioner on the same working day has been somewhat erratic since January 2015, due primarily to new workers and managers familiarising themselves with how to use and record information on Frameworki. Audits have confirmed that all contacts were screened appropriately. Whilst there has been a slight drop in performance during June 2015 at 93.04% compared with the previous month, and also when compared to June 2014, it should be noted that performance during the first two weeks of July 2015 reached 100%.
- 7 As stated in the previous performance report, how contacts and referrals are recorded and actioned has been investigated. This has resulted in a more clear definition of when a contact should be appropriately progressed to a referral, and this is reflected in the progressively lower number of contacts being progressed to a referral since January 2015. The figure of 42.35% for June 2015 is now following the overall annual trend. Whilst the majority of contacts and referrals from the police during June 2015 follow the established pattern of domestic abuse notifications, there was a higher than average number of contacts/referrals in relation to allegations of sexual abuse, both current and historical, during June 2015. This reflects increased activity as part of a large scale child protection investigation (Operation Anthem).
- 8 An in depth audit of re-referrals was also undertaken earlier in the year and, since January 2015, the re-referral rate has continued to fall. The cumulative year to date rate of 19.81% is now below the all England average and our statistical neighbours (as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014), the end of month percentage for June 2015 of 19.72% closely follows the annual trend. This performance measure will continue to be monitored by way of quarterly audits.
- 9 The number of initial assessments completed per 10,000 child population is significantly higher than our statistical neighbours and we will need to investigate this

further.

- 10 The number of initial assessments completed within timescales during June 2015 has improved in comparison with the previous month, despite there being an increase of 64% in the number of initial assessments completed. Whilst the compliance figure of 53.25% is disappointing, the need to prioritise front end safeguarding activities above the completion of initial assessments within timescale was paramount. Whilst significantly below our local target of 85%, it is comparable to the statistical neighbours' rate of 56.87%, and significantly better than the most recent West Midlands compliance rate of 25.20%.
- 11 The increase in the number of strategy discussions/meetings leading to s47 child protection investigations during June 2015 reflects the higher than usual number of child protection referrals from the police. These were in relation to the ongoing Operation Anthem child protection investigation.
- 12 Whilst the rate per 10,000 in Herefordshire of children subject to a child protection plan is higher than our statistical neighbours and the England average, the number of children subject to a plan has dropped from a high of 69.25 per 10,000 in April 2014 to 53.74 in June 2015.
- 13 As at 30 June 2015, no children were subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time: the last time this was the case was in December 2014. 10 (5.15%) children have been subject to a child protection plan for 2+ years. Whilst this figure is higher than the all England and West Midland local authorities average, all 10 of these children are members of three sibling groups, and all are in care proceedings.
- 14 During June 2015, visits within timescales to children subject to a child protection plan and statutory visits to looked after children were 76.19% and 53.13% respectively. The target for both types of visits is 100%, and performance in both of these areas will be investigated.

## **Community impact**

- 15 Delivering the corporate plan is key to the Council achieving the positive impact it wishes to make across Herefordshire and all its communities. Given the decreasing financial resources available to the Council, monitoring performance is likely to become even more important so as to ensure that resources are best directed to meet the Council's agreed priorities and statutory obligations.

## **Equality duty**

- 16 This report is to provide an update on performance for safeguarding and the equality duty is not applicable.

## **Financial implications**

- 17 This report has no financial implications and is for information and comment only.

## **Legal implications**

- 18 This report has no legal implications and is for information and comment only.

## **Risk management**

19 There are no risks associated with this report which is for information only.

## **Consultees**

20 Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board. Any actions arising from these consultations are incorporated into the main body of the report and any actions are also picked up as part of the overall improvement programme.

## **Appendices**

21 Appendix 1 - Performance report June 2015

## **Background papers**

22 None identified