

PERFORMANCE REPORTING ON CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES 2006/07 OUTTURN

Report By: Head of Commissioning & Improvement – Schools Services

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform Scrutiny Committee of the performance levels against key indicators as at March 31st 2006.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Background

3. Information on the performance of various services as measured by defined indicators is an essential part of the executive function in managing those services, and of the scrutiny function in assessing the effectiveness of those services.
4. A system has been established which collects the more significant performance information and disseminates this to managers four times a year. The Quarterly Digest will be amended and improved in future editions.
5. Scrutiny Committee will receive a copy of this digest with an accompanying report at the most appropriate meeting in the cycle of meetings already established. The first copy is attached as an appendix to this report.
6. This first report covers the period to March 31st 2007. Level of performance has been categorised in terms of direction of travel, (i.e. is performance better than it was previously) and in comparison to the target set.
7. A short commentary associated with each outcome gives some explanation of performance against target especially, where it lies in either the red or amber category. The following issues are highlighted

Be Healthy

Although categorised as green, teenage pregnancy remains a focus. Outturn figures as often is the case in a small authority, depend on the circumstances of a relative few individuals.

Staying Safe

Following the Joint Area Review (JAR) in 2005 and the recommendations made in relation to the Stay Safe outcome, the Children and Young People's Directorate has worked together with partner agencies to ensure that all children and young people in Herefordshire are provided with services to ensure that they are safe.

The JAR Action Plan has now been completed and signed off by Government Office West Midlands (GOWM). Although Herefordshire remains in a period of formal engagement, GOWM have indicated that they are now satisfied with the progress made in relation to safeguarding and there will be no further specific scrutiny of this area.

As a result of the work previously carried out in relation to thresholds for social work involvement the number of referrals to the Referral and Assessment Team (RAT) has risen sharply, significantly exceeding the targets set. This is a positive indicator and has resulted in increased numbers of assessments being carried out. Whilst this increased workload has been safely managed and prioritised, this has resulted in some pressure on timescales for completion.

In the short to medium term this is being addressed by a revised Social Worker Recruitment and Retention Strategy, which is now beginning to result in increased numbers of Social Workers in Herefordshire. In line with the recommendation arising from the JAR, Herefordshire is on track to bring the numbers of Social Workers into line with the national average by March 2009 supported by the additional investment made available from the Council.

In the longer term, the development of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) will build on the strengths of the existing Child Concern Model to improve our ability to intervene at an earlier stage with families and target support and preventative services to reduce the need for social work involvement. The CAF pilot, which was launched in January 2007 and is due to be completed in July 2007, will be formally evaluated and this will inform a roll out of CAF in Autumn 2007.

Enjoy and Achieve

The majority of targets are set by the DfES and tend to be aspirational, and they do provide challenges in attempting to meet them. Particular effort is being placed on KS2 Maths and English as the rates of improvement are not as good as in comparable authorities. School attendance is an issue in Herefordshire. Although it is below national average, it is often condoned by parents, and there is work for improvement.

Making a Positive Contribution

Further work is needed to define targets as a result of the teenage lifestyle survey.

Achieve Economic Wellbeing

The indicators suggest good performance. Further consideration is needed for those youngsters in poorly paid work without prospects of training.

Service Management

There is a determined effort to fill vacancies and recruit more social workers. Information on other indicators can be read in two ways, e.g. it is good to see more money spent on

looked after children, but if this has not been budgeted for, or it is not providing value for money, remedial action should be taken.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Scrutiny Committee

- (a) note the format in which quarterly reports will be submitted to the Committee**
- (b) assess the levels of performance against each target, the reasons behind such performance, and consider if further reports and/or action is judged to be necessary**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Quarterly Digest