

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>19 MARCH 2010</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE DIGEST – QUARTER 3 2009/2010</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO AREA:</b>	<b>CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND ICT, EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT</b>

**CLASSIFICATION:** Open

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

To present the Performance Digest for Children's Services for the third quarter of 2009/2010 (April – December 2009) and to highlight key performance issues.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT Scrutiny Committee assesses and considers the levels of performance achieved for the third quarter of 2009/2010 and considers if further reports and/or action are judged to be necessary.**

### **Key Points Summary**

- The percentage of initial assessments completed within 7 working days has significantly improved and is now ahead of the target for the year.
- Unvalidated results show that the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs including English and Maths in the 2009 exams was the same as in 2008 at 52% which is ahead of the national average of 50% but still below the target. There has been significantly improved performance in relation to the achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, unvalidated results at Key Stage 1 continue to show a downward trend over the last three years. Of particular concern is the results performance in narrowing the gap for vulnerable groups which has declined significantly on last year's performance.
- Educational attainment of looked after children, particularly at GCSE, shows good performance again this year, ahead of national and statistical neighbour averages.
- Persistent Absence in High Schools fell for the second successive year to 5.3% which met the target for 2009-10 and was 1.2% below this year's target. The national average of persistent absence is 5.58%. Overall absence in High Schools has fallen for the third successive year. In terms of exclusions, the trend overall is down with 18 permanent exclusions in 2008-2009.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Hilary Hall, Head of Performance on (01432) 260801

Clearly improving performance in these two areas ensures that children and young people are attending schools which, in turn, will positively impact on their achievement and attainment.

## **Alternative Options**

- 1 There are no Alternative Options.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 2 To ensure that progress against the indicators, for which the Children and Young People's Directorate is responsible, is understood and to ensure that the reasons for actual or potential under-performance are understood and recommendations made for remedial action.

## **Introduction and Background**

- 3 The Performance Digest is produced quarterly and is the mechanism for monitoring key performance indicators, covering service delivery captured in the Local Area Agreement, the Children and Young People's Directorate and the Children and Young People's Plan. The Digest has been issued to Committee members as a separate document. Copies are available to the public on request.

## **Key Considerations**

- 4 Key areas in each of the Every Child Matters outcome areas, to which the Committee's attention should be drawn, are set out below:

### ***Be Healthy***

91% of looked after children had a dental check and an annual health assessment which was slightly above the target of 90%. There had been some issues with the timeliness of notifications of children/young people becoming looked after which has impacted on the overall number receiving health assessments. This has now been addressed and resolved. The first outturn for NI 54 – services for disabled children – was published in the third quarter. It measures parental satisfaction with the services provided for their disabled children through a survey administered nationally by the DCSF. 60% of Herefordshire parents were satisfied with the services received which is line with the rest of the West Midlands.

660 young people, aged between 15 and 24 years, were screened for Chlamydia in the third quarter of the year, which is below the expected trajectory. The number is expected to increase in the fourth quarter due to changes in commissioning. The prevalence of Chlamydia in young people is currently 7.5% which is below the national prevalence rate of 12% (NI 113a).

The cumulative number of assessments undertaken under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is 303 which is just above the annual target of 300. 152 new CAFs were started in Quarter 3.

### ***Stay Safe***

At the end of Quarter 1, for the rolling year, there were 277 referrals per 10,000 population aged under 18. 73.8% of initial assessments were completed in 7 working days (NI 59) which continues the significant improvement in performance against this indicator. As previously reported, a large number of uncompleted core assessment which were already out of date had been identified. These have now been completed and performance in relation to the

timeliness of completing core assessments (NI 60) has improved slightly to 62% from 57% at the end of Quarter 2. The potentially negative impact of a large number of out of date core assessments has been mitigated by a focus on completing new core assessments in timescale.

There has been an increase in the number of children subject to a child protection plan at the end of quarter 3 from 128 as at 30 September 2009 to 146 as at 31 December 2009. The percentage of children subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time continues to maintain good performance at 7% (NI 65). 100% of reviews of child protection cases (NI 67) have taken place during Quarter 3 and all children with a child protection plan have an allocated social worker (DIS 1219). The number of looked after children has increased from 144 as at 30 September 2009 to 170 as at 31 December 2009. Performance in relation to the stability of placements for looked after children (NI 62 and 63) in terms of the number of moves and length of placement, continues to be very strong, ahead of national and statistical neighbour averages.

### ***Enjoy and Achieve***

Inclusion of the results for the two Academies has impacted on the results for the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs (NI 75). The outturn is 52.2% which is below the 2008/2009 outturn of 53.2% and below target. Excluding the Academies gives an outturn of 54.8%. Although the two Academies are not maintained by the local authority, we are required to include their results in our indicators.

Although not achieving the target for achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (NI 72), the outturn of 45.8% represents a significant improvement on the 2008 outturn which was 42%. Unvalidated data for Key Stage 2 shows that 70.8% of children achieved Level 4 in English and Maths (NI 73) which is 2% below the 2008 outturn. Results in Key Stage 2 have shown a continuing downward trend over the last three years and improvement work in the current academic year will focus on embedding specific strategies around reading and writing, focusing on tracking pupil progress and continuing universal support and training for school, together with targeted work with key schools.

As at the end of Quarter 3, 3 personal education plans for looked after children (CYPEA-6) have been carried forward to the New Year, giving an outturn of 97%. 100% of looked after children sat at least one GCSE examination (DIS 1406). 3 looked after children out of a cohort of 14 achieved 5 or more A\*-C GCSE including English and Maths; a further 3 achieved 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs not including English and Maths.

### ***Make a Positive Contribution***

There has been excellent performance in relation to the final warnings, reprimands and convictions of looked after young people (PAF CF/18) which is well below the target and last year's outturn. During Quarter 3, there were 44 first time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 to 17 years (NI 111), a cumulative total for the year of 108 which is below the year end outturn for 2008/2009. In relation to re-offending (NI 19), there were 0.39 re-offences per young person in the cohort after 6 months. The 2005 baseline figure for the same period was 0.73. 4% of young people were sentenced to custody having received a conviction in court (NI 43) which remains within the national target of 5% or less.

The percentage of looked after young people reporting that they have participated in their reviews is considerably down on the Quarter 2 outturn (PAF CF/63). This has been underreported. Investigation has shown that the box which feeds the report on Frameworks has not routinely been completed. This has now been addressed and we anticipate that the year end outturn will reflect the usual good performance in this area.

## ***Achieve Economic Wellbeing***

The impact of the recession and general downturn in the economy continues to impact on this outcome area. The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NI 117) has risen to 5.8% which is above the target but in line with the 2008/2009 outturn. Additional NEET programme has been made available, together with E2E and 4U provision.

However, 90.5% of young offenders were engaged in education, training and employment at the end of Quarter 3, a significant improvement on the previous two quarters. 100% of young people of statutory school age and 80% (8 out of 10) of those above school age were in full time education, employment or training.

At 31 December 2009, one family was occupying bed and breakfast accommodation (CYP-AEW1) but they have since moved out and are now accommodated in temporary accommodation.

## ***Service Management***

Social worker post qualifying training- The General Social Care Council introduced the framework for post-qualifying education and training in 2007. This framework builds on the degree (or predecessor qualifications) in social work. The overall objective of the awards within the framework is to ensure that post-qualifying education and training improves the standard of social work practice. The framework is split into three levels, each corresponding to a different stage of professional development (Specialist Level, Higher Specialist Level and the Advanced Level). A student social worker studies for their degree in social work for 3 years. A newly qualified social worker is then expected to work in a practice setting for 12 months under a strict induction programme co-working cases before commencing the consolidation award (this award now replaces PQ1). This can take 12 months and they are then expected to work towards the next 5 modules of the specialist award taking a further 2 years. The focus of the Specialist Level is on consolidating, extending and deepening initial professional competence in practice.

Social workers can then move on to the Higher specialist and Advanced level awards taking a further 2 years each.

61% of children's social workers in Herefordshire have achieved PQ1 award/consolidation module, (DIS 3124) against a target of 60%. From June 2010 Herefordshire Council is implementing a retention incentive model that includes a mandatory expectation that all 12 month post qualified social workers will undertake the consolidation module. Therefore, Herefordshire Council's target will increase significantly to include all eligible social workers achieving the PQ1/consolidation module.

There were 17.5 assessed social work practice-learning days per full time equivalent social worker. 8.68 working days were lost to sickness absence per FTE within Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children Service (HR02), slightly ahead of the target of 8 working days. Managers, supported by HR, have been proactively managing short-term absence cases through the corporate policy and procedure and there has also been a corresponding reduction in the number of long-term absence cases. The social worker establishment, as at 31 December 2009, stood at 49.9 FTE against a target of 57 FTE (HR03). There are 4 more Social workers due to commence their posts between April and June 2010.

## **Community Impact**

5 None.

## **Financial Implications**

6 Remedial action in respect of the directorate's performance may require reallocation of resources within existing budgets. This is being addressed by the Directorate Leadership Team.

## **Legal Implications**

7 None.

## **Risk Management**

8 The risks to achievement of the indicators, for which the directorate is responsible, are identified by officers as part of the service planning process. Any significant risks are escalated to the directorate risk register, and corporate risk register, as appropriate. Day to day management of risk is undertaken by responsible officers, in conjunction with their Assistant Directors.

## **Consultees**

9 None.

## **Appendices**

10 Performance Digest circulated with the agenda as a separate document.

## **Background Papers**

- None identified.