

MEETING:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	10 DECEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	PERFORMANCE DIGEST – QUARTER 2 2010-2011
REPORT BY:	HEAD OF QUALITY AND IMPROVEMENT

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To present the Performance Digest for Children's Services for Quarter 2 of 2010-2011 and to highlight key performance issues.

Recommendation

THAT Scrutiny Committee assesses and considers the levels of performance achieved in Quarter 2 of 2010-2011 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 fallen during Quarter 2 as a result of issues highlighted as a result of the unannounced and announced inspections by Ofsted during the summer. As a result, the focus has been on improving the quality of assessments and ensuring that children are seen in a timely way. Robust management action has evidenced clear improvements as a result and these were recognised in the feedback from the Ofsted inspection. In addition, targets for improvement to the end of the financial year have now been set and agreed by the Service Improvement Group established to support and monitor improvements to the service. Alongside this, there has been a significant increase in the number of referrals to children's social care – 318 referrals per 10,000 population, compared with 261 per 10,000 population in Quarter1. Evidence suggests this is due to increased awareness in partner agencies arising from the serious case reviews published earlier in the year.
- Outcomes for children in care continue to show good performance, in relation to placement stability and timeliness of reviews. This is against a backdrop of a significant increase in the number of children coming into care – 205 as at 30 September 2010, compared with 179 at 30 June 2010. In addition, the number of children subject to a child protection plan has continued to rise and as at 30 September 2010, stood at 200.
- Unvalidated examination results show that, compared to our national and statistical neighbours, overall Herefordshire continues to improve although not achieving the aspirational targets set

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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by the Department for Education. There are some areas that require specific improvement in relation to achievement in the early years and primary phases. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+ at Key Stage 2 in both English and Maths increased slightly to 71.4% from 70.8% in 2009. Two levels progression in English between Key Stages 1 and 2 decreased, but improved for Maths. At secondary phase, the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths increased to 54.9% from 52.2% in 2009. In addition, the achievement of 2 or more GCSEs A*-C in Science continues to improve, 70.3% in 2010 compared with 68% in 2009.

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.

Key Considerations

- 4 The Performance Digest has been circulated to Committee members as a separate document with the agenda and is available on request from the report author. 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

A significant number of the indicators in this outcome area are subject to annual reporting in March 2011. In addition, many of the indicators rely on data from the bi-annual Every Child Matters survey. Subject to funding being available, the next survey is due to be undertaken in March 2011 with the results anticipated to be available in September 2011. Furthermore, data for some national indicators was collected via the annual TellUs Survey. This survey has, however, been discontinued by the new government and it is unclear how, and in what form, these indicators will continue.

There have been 60 diagnosed cases of Chlamydia in the resident 15 – 24 year old population and 41 of these cases are now receiving treatment. Ensuring that young people receive screening for Chlamydia remains a challenge, with the target for the year being set at 6,930 young people to be screened. To date, 1565 screens have taken place.

131 assessments under the common assessment framework (CAF) were undertaken during the second quarter, slightly below the outturn for Quarter 1 which was 178. The slightly lower outturn is attributed to the school summer holidays given that the majority of CAFs are undertaken in schools. However, it is anticipated that the target of 500 CAFs in the financial year will be achieved.

Stay Safe

The number of referrals to children's social care has increased significantly during Quarter 2. For the rolling year to 30 September 2010, there were 318 referrals per 10,000 population, compared with 261 per 10,000 population to 30 June 2010. Evidence suggests this is due to increased awareness in partner agencies as a result of the publication of the serious case reviews earlier in the year. However, the percentage of repeat referrals remains low at 16% which is well below statistical neighbours and England averages.

54% of initial assessments were recorded as completed in 7 working days (NI 59) in the year to date. Performance in terms of timeliness has slipped during Quarter 2 as a result of the management action taken in respect of improving quality of assessments and ensuring that children are seen in a timely way. Clear targets for improvement have been set and there is evidence of improvement into Quarter 3. The percentage of core assessments completed in 35 working days has also fallen slightly to 55%. Again, clear management action is in place to address this and improvements have been evidenced into Quarter 3.

All child protection and looked after children (LAC) Reviews were completed in the rolling year to 30 September 2010 although some were slightly outside of the timescale. As these reviews cover the rolling year, some reviews were delayed due to the adverse weather earlier in the year. There has been a significant increase in the number of children subject to a child protection plan; from 175 at 30 June 2010 to 201 at 30 September 2010. Similarly, the number of children coming into the Council's care has also significantly increased – from 179 at 30 June 2010 to 205 at 30 September 2010. Performance in relation to the stability of placements for LAC (NI 62 & 63) in terms of the number of moves and length of placement continues to be very strong and is recognised both regionally and nationally.

Enjoy and Achieve

The percentage of statements of special educational needs (SEN) completed by the authority in accordance with the statutory process within 26 weeks remains at 100% which is excellent performance and well ahead of statistical neighbours.

Performance in relation to examination results was considered in some depth at the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, particularly in relation to the early years and primary phases. In relation to early years, over 95% of the children have access to pre-school provision and 83% of provision is either good or outstanding. The fall in standards at Early Years Foundation Stage is being addressed through intensive training programmes and the introduction of a new software programme, eprofile, to improve the accuracy of data submission. Results in relation to Key Stage 2, Level 4 at English and Maths, improved in 2010, compared with 2009, but did not achieve target. Progression between Key Stages 1 and 2 was better in Maths than English.

As reported in October 2010, many schools improved on their record GCSE results of a year ago, particularly in the relatively new benchmark measure of five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C including English and mathematics. A particularly high standard in this measure was achieved by Fairfield High School (71 percent), John Masefield High School (64 percent), St Mary's RC High School (72 percent), Wigmore High School (66 percent), Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat school (60 percent) and John Kyrle High School and Sixth Form Centre (59 percent). All high schools in Herefordshire performed either at or above the previous national average for students achieving five or more GCSE grades at A*-C, and some schools made significant increases on last year's record high results.

Absence in secondary schools in the last academic year improved slightly over 2009 to 7%. This figure was inflated by the unexpectedly high number of school days lost where travelling

was difficult due to snow and the ash cloud. Conversely, absence in primary schools rose for the third successive year and is above national averages for the first time in 3 years. As a result, this is an area for focus in the current academic year.

Make a Positive Contribution

For the rolling year to 30 September 2010, 93% of LAC participated in all of their reviews. Encouraging participation of children and young people in their reviews remains a high priority with specific training being run for young people to enable them to chair their own reviews.

In terms of re-offending by young offenders, 10 in the cohort of 69 re-offended which is well below the target for the year. For the year to date, there were 48 first time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17. Assuming a consistent profile for the rest of the year, this would give a projected outturn of 96 which is well below the outturn for 2009/2010 of 152. The percentage of young people receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody remains very low – out of 50 court disposals, just one was a custodial outcome.

The remaining indicators in this outcome area rely on data either from the TellUs survey or the bi-annual local survey. As indicated above, the future for both surveys is unclear at this stage.

Achieve Economic Wellbeing

Out of 33 young offenders in the cohort, 20 are in suitable education, employment or training (EET). This is currently slightly below the outturn for 2009/2010. In terms of accommodation for offenders, 30 out of the cohort are deemed to be in suitable accommodation.

Data for the achievement of Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications is due for publication in March/April 2011. Prior attainment data would suggest that there will continue to be improvement in the achievement of these qualifications when the data is officially published.

In terms of increasing the percentage of year 11s moving into learning destinations, including vulnerable young people (such as those with learning disability and difficulties and teenage mothers), tracking is continuing. However, it is widely anticipated that the economic climate will cause a rise in the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). A new NEET Strategy has been drafted taking account of the current economic situation and is the subject of consultation partners. In terms of teenage mothers, the Young Mums To Be programme is operating well and was positively endorsed by the recent Ofsted inspection.

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. There is a particular focus on the management of risks associated with the achievement of the Local Area Agreement indicators.

Consultees

- 9 None.

Appendices

- 10 Appendix 1: Performance Digest (circulated with the agenda as a separate document)

Background Papers

- None identified.