

MEETING:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	11 MARCH 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	PERFORMANCE DIGEST – QUARTER 3 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 3 of 2010-2011, to update on the recommendations from the Ofsted inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services and to highlight key performance issues.

Recommendation

THAT Scrutiny Committee assesses and considers the levels of performance achieved in Quarter 3 of 2010-2011 and considers if further reports and/or action are judged to be necessary, and considers progress against the inspection action plan

Key Points Summary

- The percentage of initial assessments completed within 7 working days remains low compared to target at the end of Quarter 3. The Referral and Assessment Team has focused on improvements to the quality of assessments and ensuring that children are seen in a timely way. There is a Referral and Assessment improvement group which is driving forward improvements and the service is being re-launched with partners in May 2011. Since the beginning of January 2011, the focus has now moved to improving the timeliness of initial assessments and the latest available data shows an improvement in this.
- The number of referrals to children's social care has continued to rise – 388 referrals per 10,000 population, compared with 318 per 10,000 population in Quarter 2. Reasons for this are multi-faceted including increased awareness in partner agencies arising from the serious case reviews published earlier in the year and underuse of the Common Assessment Framework and Multi Agency Groups to ensure early intervention for lower level concerns. This is being addressed through the Referral and Assessment Improvement Group which is working with partner agencies to improve the quality of referrals received and appropriately stepping down referrals to the Common Assessment Framework.
- As at 31 December 2010, there were 177 children with a child protection plan, a reduction of 23 from the position at the end of September 2010 due to a number of plans being appropriately

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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discontinued during the period. Outcomes for children in care continue to show good performance, particularly 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 since 1 April 2010 from 155 at 31 March 2010 to 211 as at 31 December 2010.

- Validated examination results show that, compared to our national and statistical neighbours, overall Herefordshire continues to improve although not achieving the aspirational targets set by the Department for Education. Areas that require specific improvement in relation to achievement in the early years and primary phases are improving Herefordshire's attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, in which there were disappointing results in 2010, improving all subjects at key stage 1 with a particular emphasis on improving the performance of boys especially in reading and writing, improving the quality of leadership in schools to ensure that all pupils make the required progress and achieve well and improving all subjects at key stage 2 with a particular emphasis on improving the progress of all pupils in maths and the performance of the more able in the subject.
- 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 56% from 52.2% in 2009. This is ahead of the West Midlands average (54.2%) and the national average (55.2%). In relation to statistical neighbours, only Gloucestershire, Shropshire and Dorset have a higher achievement in this area. In addition, the achievement of 2 or more GCSEs A*-C in Science continues to improve, 71.4% in 2010 compared with 68% in 2009. Herefordshire is the best in terms of its statistical neighbours in this area and ahead of both the West Midlands (62.6%) and national (61.6%) averages.

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, clear recommendations are in place to improve performance and robust monitoring identifies progress.

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 Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan. Performance was a key underpinning element of the Ofsted inspections during 2010.

Key Considerations

- 4 The **Performance Digest** (Appendix 1) has been circulated as a separate document with the agenda and copies are available 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. Due to funding constraints, there are no plans to repeat this survey this year. Furthermore, data for some national indicators was collected via the annual TellUs Survey. This survey has, however, been discontinued by the government and it is unclear how, and in what form, these indicators will continue.

45.9% of babies are recorded as being breastfed at 6-8 weeks which is below the target of 60%. The rate is significantly below target which in part is due to historic staffing issues in midwifery and health visiting and a lack of resource for implementing peer support provision. All health visiting staff have received UNICEF breastfeeding training and discussions are underway with the local midwifery service and Children's Centres to identify ways of increasing the number of babies being breastfed. An overall plan to increase breastfeeding in Herefordshire has been delayed due to the structural developments which are moving the provision of health services into the Integrated Care Organisation. However, development of a plan for antenatal group provision delivered in partnership between Children's Centres and the county's midwifery and health visiting services will begin shortly. The work will be led by the Interim Professional Lead for Health Visiting and School Nurses and will draw on the good practice and experience of antenatal groups which are established in North Rural Herefordshire and in Ledbury and on national research which clearly shows a link between good antenatal group provision and increased rates of breastfeeding.

A total of 416 assessments under the common assessment framework (CAF) have been undertaken in the year to date. This means that the target of 500 CAFs in the financial year is very likely to be achieved. In order to measure the direct impact of the CAF process, the CAF documentation allows the involved parent and/or child/young person to outline how much things have actually changed at the end of each meeting. Through this it has been established that over 90% of families feel included in the process and over 85% of families report that their, and their children's situations have improved due to the CAF.

Stay Safe

The number of referrals to children's social care rose again during Quarter 2. For the rolling year to 31 December 2010, there were 388 referrals per 10,000 population, compared with 318 per 10,000 population to 30 September 2010. Reasons for this are multi-faceted including increased awareness in partner agencies arising from the serious case reviews published earlier in the year and underuse of the Common Assessment Framework and Multi Agency Groups to ensure early intervention for lower level concerns. Work is underway with partner agencies, through the multi-agency referral desk, to improve the quality of referrals and more appropriately direct referrers to the use of the CAF. However, the percentage of repeat referrals remains low at 8% which is well below statistical neighbours and England averages. Cases now receive a higher quality step down through the CAF process and children then have a multiagency team around them. This does reduce the need for one agency to become worried and re-refer as the team around the child shares tasks and continues working with the family. The Levels of Need pathway is helping to ensure that.

55% of initial assessments were recorded as completed in 7 working days (NI 59) in the year to date. Performance in terms of timeliness remains low – improving timeliness is a key focus for the Referral and Assessment Team. Between June and September 2010, intensive resource and focus was applied to the referral and assessment service resulting in robust oversight of all cases, changes to systems and management and the start of improving practice, including proactive understanding of the impact of ethnicity, culture and diversity in assessments. From October 2010, a referral and assessment improvement plan has been in place to overhaul systems and practice, including partner contributions, with the aim of a redesigned and re-launched fit for purpose referral service from May 2011. Improvements to Frameworki, the electronic case management system, continue to be made in line with the improvement plan agreed following the inspection. The percentage of core assessments

completed in 35 working days has also fallen to 48% and a clear management action is in place to address this although the focus in the short term is on improving the timeliness of initial assessments.

All child protection and looked after children (LAC) Reviews were completed in the rolling year to 30 December 2010 although some (12 out of 205) took place slightly outside of the timescale. This was because of the adverse weather conditions during December 2010 when some reviews had to be postponed and rearranged. As at 31 December 2010, there were 177 children with a child protection plan, a reduction from the position at the end of September 2010 due to a number of plans being appropriately discontinued during the period. The number of children coming into the Council's care has stabilised following the sharp increase reported at the end of Quarter 2 – 211 at 31 December 2010. Despite the rise in the number of children coming into the Council's care, 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.

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 from 46.2% to 44.6% in 2010 is being addressed through intensive training programmes and the introduction of a new software programme, eprofile, to improve the accuracy of data submission. In 2010 Herefordshire was one of the worst performing Local Authorities in the country in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has implications on the subsequent performance at Key Stages 1 and 2 as it is vital that children get a good start in their reception year. Quality assurance of the early years' data highlighted misunderstandings in some schools and settings about what constitutes a 'good level of development' in early years. Analysis of the early years data for a number of schools has revealed a pattern of low data that is currently being investigated.

12.3% of Herefordshire's primary schools are rated outstanding by Ofsted, 56.8% rated good, 28.4% rated satisfactory and 2.5% inadequate. Results in relation to Key Stage 2, Level 4 at English and Maths, improved in 2010, compared with 2009, from 70.8% to 71.4% but did not achieve target. The percentage of pupils making the expected 2 levels' progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 was better in Maths than English, compared with 2009. 86% of pupils made the expected progress in English in 2010 (compared with 87.4% in 2009) and 80% of pupils made the expected progress in Maths in 2010 (compared with 78.9% in 2009).

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. The overall figure for Herefordshire was 55.1% compared with 52.2% in 2009. 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.

There are a number of structures and initiatives in place which have helped support the continuing improvement in Herefordshire High Schools. Each school has a nationally accredited School Improvement Partner (SIP) who is employed through the local authority to monitor, support and challenge the school they work with. A minimum of five days are routinely allocated for this work throughout the year to cover visits and preparation and report writing. Where a school is identified for additional support the number of SIP days is

increased. The School Improvement Service moderates the quality of reports and picks up issues arising for action. Herefordshire secondary SIPs are either current or recently retired head teachers or a local authority school improvement officer. In addition all schools have an attached school improvement service advisor who provides day to day support, challenge, monitoring and advice. In 2009, the School Improvement Service nominated five high schools to be involved in the national Gaining Ground two year project which has brought substantial additional funding into each of those five schools to further school improvement. This project has also funded ten days' support from an outstanding partner school, three within and two outside of the county. Extra SIP days have also been allocated as part of this initiative. From 2009, the School Improvement Service has been jointly funding a two year project with 12 high schools provided through the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust to promote networking and sharing of good practice between schools nationally.

The English Baccalaureate is a new performance measure championed by the Government, to enable international comparisons and will become a focus of attention in the current academic year. Estimates based on 2010 performance indicate that 20% of Herefordshire pupils would have achieved the English Baccalaureate. This compares to 15.5% nationally.

At Key Stage 2, there were exceptionally good results by children in the Council's care. Three pupils out of the cohort of 5 achieved level 4 in English and in Maths. Results were below target at Key Stage 4 with three pupils out of the cohort of 16 achieving 5A*-C GCSE including English and Maths.

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 which delayed children returning to school from holidays abroad. 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 31 December 2010, 91.5% of LAC participated in all of their reviews. In order to 'count' for the purposes of this indicator, each young person must participate in each of their reviews. This represents a downward trend in terms of participation and encouraging participation of children and young people in their reviews remains a high priority. Specific training is being run for young people to enable them to chair their own reviews.

In terms of re-offending by young offenders, Quarter 3 data is not yet available. However, looking at the Quarter 2 information, 10 in the cohort of 69 re-offended, committing 22 offences, which is well below the target for the year. For the year to date, there were 81 first time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17. Assuming a consistent profile for the rest of the year, the projected outturn will be 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 at just under 2%.

16% of young people aged 13-19 gained an accredited outcome in youth work compared with the target of 25%. This is due to an increased focus on delivering more intensive targeted work with vulnerable young people.

Achieve Economic Wellbeing

76.5% of young offenders are in suitable education, employment or training (EET) which is above the outturn for 2009/2010. Herefordshire did not set a local target for this indicator. However, in terms of comparisons, this outturn compares favourably with the whole Youth

Offending Service area (72.1%), the West Midlands region (73.2%) and the country as a whole (73.8%). In terms of accommodation for offenders, 91.4% 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.

Provisional data for the percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is 7% which is above the 2009/2010 outturn of 5.9%. The current economic situation and its impact on businesses and overall confidence has affected this outturn. This is reflected across the country. The work of the Connexions Personal Advisors and commissioned services, such as 2XL, who operate an outreach detached project to support those who are NEET, is helping to keep the figure as low as possible.

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. 91% of current year 11 young people are recorded as being in a learning destination. 71% of 16-19 year olds with learning disabilities and difficulties (LDD) are in EET which is below the target for the year and last year's outturn. This group is disproportionately represented in the NEET cohort and specific positive action is being taken to increase opportunities for them. This includes specific support for special schools. Conversely, the percentage of 16-19 year old teenage mothers in EET has increased from 21% in 2009/2010 to 27%. The Young Mums To Be programme, with its accredited outcomes, is having a positive impact on this cohort.

Service Management

61% of social workers who need to obtain the childcare Post Qualifying award (PQ) have achieved their PQ1 award. The number of assessed social work practice learning days per full time social worker has increased to 25, as forecast in Quarter 2 and is now above the target for the year. In terms of early years leaders, 59% have a qualification at Level 4 or above. The results of the Early Years Foundation Degree is due shortly, once validated by the University of Worcester, and it is anticipated that the target for the year will be achieved (65%) as a result.

The number of working days lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent member of staff in the Children and Young People's Directorate was 9.44 which is above the target of 8 but below the 2009/2010 outturn of 10.6.

Recruitment to the vacant posts in the social worker establishment is underway and it is anticipated that the target will be achieved by the end of the financial year.

Inspection

- 5 In June 2010, Ofsted undertook the first annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children's safeguarding in Herefordshire. As previously advised to Committee, this inspection highlighted significant weaknesses in the referral and assessment service resulting in one area for priority action. Prompt and effective remedial action was taken to ensure safety of all children referred for a service and work to substantially and sustainably improve this particular service is ongoing. The subsequent full announced inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services across the partnership took place during September 2010. The overall judgments were, for safeguarding – overall effectiveness and capacity to improve both adequate; for looked after children – overall effectiveness and capacity to improve both good.

- 6 In November 2010, Ofsted published its annual rating of children's services in Herefordshire as adequate overall.
- 7 In relation to safeguarding, improvements were particularly noted in the areas of elective home education, children missing from home and school, raised awareness of domestic abuse and private fostering. Good elements of safeguarding were identified as a well conceived CAF model; effective safe recruitment; safeguarding training; Family Intervention Project, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) officer. Overwhelmingly children and young people told inspectors that they felt safe at school and in their communities and cited excellent examples of approaches to reduce bullying. Areas for improvement were identified as being performance management and quality assurance, commissioning, escalation of concerns in and between agencies, effective sexual abuse examination arrangements for children and ensuring value for money.
- 8 The overall effectiveness of services and outcomes for looked after children, young people and care leavers were judged as good with some outstanding features. Children and young people reported consistently that the care they receive is good or very good. Placement stability is very high in Herefordshire, above national average. The impact of agencies to ensure looked after children are successful in enjoying and achieving is outstanding, with children and young people achieving and attaining very well in Herefordshire. Looked after children are actively involved in service design including recruitment of staff and chairing their own reviews. The impact of agencies in enabling looked after children and young people to achieve economic well being is good with an effective aftercare service and plans to offer apprenticeships through the partnership for all care leavers who want it.
- 9 Following the announced inspection in September 2010, the partnership produced an improvement plan with actions to meet the key recommendations made by Ofsted. This action plan, together with progress, is attached for the Committee's consideration at Appendix 2. In addition, Ofsted's report highlighted other improvement actions which have been incorporated into a further more detailed action plan. All actions set out in this additional action plan are rated either Green or Amber.

Community Impact

- 10 None.

Financial Implications

- 11 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

- 12 None.

Risk Management

- 13 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

14 None.

Appendices

15 Appendix 1: Performance Digest (circulated with the agenda as a separate document - copies are available from the report author).

16 Appendix 2: Inspection action plan

Background Papers

- Ofsted – Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services, Herefordshire, 22 October 2010.