

MEETING:	HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING DATE:	1 October 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	Children's Safeguarding Performance Data
REPORT BY:	Assistant Director Safeguarding & Family Support

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note the performance in relation to children's safeguarding for the month of August 2014, 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 August 2014, together

with trend data over the previous 12 months.

- 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. However, this is still work in progress with anticipated further improvements over the next six to nine months. 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 in the previous 12 months. 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 are as detailed below:
- 6 Performance in relation to all contacts received by children's safeguarding being screened by a qualified practitioner within 24 hours of receipt continues to be good, particularly since February 2014. Performance for August 2014 was 99.65%.
- 7 The overuse of contacts and referrals, whilst not compromising the safeguarding of children, could be creating unnecessary activity and further inefficiencies within the system. This area will be subject to detailed analysis as part of our quality assurance programme and we will report back to the committee in due course on the outcome of investigations.
- 8 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.
- 9 The number of initial assessments completed within timescales has significantly improved over the past 12 months, although there has been a drop in performance over the summer months.
- 10 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 54.85 in August 2014 - a reduction of 20.8%. Whilst it is anticipated that this downward trend will continue, it is likely that there will be some fluctuations, reflecting week to week variance in child protection cases coming to light.
- 11 The number of children subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time has reduced by 33.33% since May 2014, although Herefordshire's percentage rate is above that of the England average and that of our statistical neighbours. Following an audit of these cases, a new process is currently being introduced which will routinely examine all children who are subject to a plan following their second review conference and, should the plan be considered ineffective, the case will be presented to legal panel.
- 12 There has been a significant reduction in the number of children in Herefordshire subject to a child protection plan for two or more years. Performance is above that of our statistical neighbours, the England average and the West Midlands Consortium.
- 13 During August 2014, visits within timescales to children subject to a child protection plan and statutory visits to looked after children were 91.94% and 98.03% respectively. The target for both types of visits is 100%.
- 14 Particular emphasis is being given to performance in this area through meetings

involving the Leader, Cabinet members and senior management. Regular monthly meetings are held and reports are also provided to the Improvement Board and the HSCB.

Community impact

- 15 Information contained in the attached performance report will be used to inform service delivery and enable resources to be appropriately targeted in the community.

Equality and human rights

- 16 This report pays due regard to:

Note: Under Section 149, the "General Duty" on public authorities is set out thus:

"A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this Act;

advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

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 Improvement Board and 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 Children's Safeguarding and Family Support Performance Report – August 2014.

Background papers

- None identified.